



## Sun Protection Recommendations

Your providers at Illinois Dermatology Institute want you to enjoy the outdoors while protecting your skin adequately from the sun. We recommend regular use of sunscreens to prevent skin cancer, premature aging, and sun damage. You should choose a sunscreen that has an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of at least 30 and is broad spectrum, meaning it protects against UVA and UVB rays. UVA rays can penetrate windows and are responsible for sun damage, wrinkles and skin cancers. UVB causes sun damage, wrinkles, skin cancer and sun tan/sun burns.

While nothing is as safe as sun avoidance, particularly between 10 am and 4 pm when the sun is at it's strongest, that is often not realistic. If you going to be outside for 20 minutes or more, we would like you to use sunscreen. It is also best to wear a wide brimmed hat and sun protective clothing whenever possible. Ideally, sunscreen is applied 20-30 mins before sun exposure.

Sunscreen is most effective when applied generously (a golf ball sized amount for the body) and reapplied often - every 2-4 hours in order to get the SPF listed on the packaging. Sunscreens are chemically unstable and break down within a few hours. Reapplications are especially important after sweating, swimming or toweling off.

Sun protection can be chemical or physical.

Chemical sunscreens tend to rub in more easily and feel lighter on the skin. They contain ingredients that act as filters and reduce ultraviolet radiation to the skin. People with sensitive skin are sometimes more irritated by chemical sunscreens. Some examples of ingredients that provide chemical sunscreen protection are: **Avobenzone, Homosalate, Octisalate and many others.**

Physical sunblocks are products that physically block and can reflect ultraviolet radiation. Sunblocks are broad spectrum and less likely to irritate those with sensitive skin. Physical sunblocks are slightly better at preventing the browning of the skin and brown spot formation.

Some examples of ingredients in sunblocks: **titanium dioxide, zinc oxide.**

Above all, the best sunscreen is the one that you will use. Application is important, and it is now recommended that you "spread it and forget it" and not rub sunscreen in too much. Spray sunscreens are fine, so long as you are careful to apply them in a non-windy environment until they are seen on the skin and not rubbed in, but allowed to dry. Stick formulations are helpful on the face, especially around the eyes and other areas where sunscreens may rub off easily or irritate the eye

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