



Sun Protection

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Basic Steps

- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30 on all exposed skin, even on cloudy days.
- Use a water resistant sunscreen when swimming or with excessive sweating. Reapply immediately after swimming or excessive sweating, even when using a water resistant sunscreen.
- Reapply sunscreen frequently and generously (every 2 hours when staying out in the sun).
- Wear protective clothing (see below).
- Wear a broad brimmed hat and sun glasses.
- Plan outdoor activities early or late in the day to avoid peak sunlight hours between 10am-4pm.
- Stay in the shade when possible.
- Avoid tanning beds. There is no such thing as a safe tan
- Use a lip balm with sunscreen to protect your lips
- Insect repellent degrades sunscreen. Apply the insect repellent to your clothing and hair. The vapors will still keep the insects away.

Clothing is the Best Protection

Sunscreen and protective clothing should be used together. Broad brim hats are also very important. (Baseball style caps let too much sun get on your skin.) Most fabrics that you cannot see through give reasonable protection, but there are specially made clothing and swimwear lines that give a very high amount of protection. These are available online, in some sporting goods stores, and through catalogues. Some examples include Sun Precautions (www.sunprecautions.com) 800.882.7860, Coolibar (www.coolibar.com) 800.926.6509 and REI (www.rei.com)

Sunscreen Information

Some public health messages tell patients to use sunscreens with SPF 15 or above. The trouble is that most patients apply sunscreen so thinly that they receive one third or less of the SPF rating of the sunscreen (that is, when using a sunscreen with a SPF 15, most patients get actual protection of SPF 5 or less). To compensate, patients should use sunscreens with SPF 30 or above and apply them thickly.

To get the full SPF of any sunscreen, apply a ribbon of sunscreen as thick as toothpaste along the index and middle fingers from the fingertip to the palm. That "two finger" amount should be used on each of these areas: one arm, the chest, the face, scalp and neck. Four fingers should be used on the front torso, the back torso, and each leg. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours when out in the sun.

To get good UVA protection, a sunscreen should contain one of the following ingredients: Helioplex, avobenzone, parsol 1789, ecamsule (mexoryl), zinc oxide, or titanium dioxide.

For individuals with sensitive skin, clothing may be the best option. Sunscreens that tend to be less irritating include Vanicream® (800.325.8232 or www.psico.com) and sunscreens that are "chemical free" (contain only zinc oxide or titanium dioxide).

For additional information:

- http://www.aad.org/SkinCancerNews/SafeSunTips/protect_yourself.html
- www.dermnz.org

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names; any similar products may be used. Herbs and supplements are sold over-the-counter. Kaiser Permanente carries only herb categories for which some evidence exists to show that the herbs may be effective to treat certain medical conditions.