

STAY SAFE IN THE SUN

**HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD PUT SUNSCREEN, SHIRTS, AND SHADE IN THE SAME
NON-NEGOTIABLE CATEGORY AS CAR SEATS, TOOTHBRUSHING, AND BIKE HELMETS.**

You probably think you're on the ball when it comes to sun safety: You always put sunscreen on your kids, and they rarely, if ever, come home looking like a lobster. However, new research has found that overall sun exposure in childhood— not just burns—significantly increases the risk of skin cancer. "Young, developing skin may be particularly vulnerable to UV rays," says Parents advisor Lawrence Eichenfield, chief of pediatric and adolescent dermatology at Rady Children's Hospital, in San Diego. If your child is getting intense sun exposure playing outdoors, she's in danger of developing melanoma—the most serious type of skin cancer—even if she has what appears to be a healthy tan." Childhood melanoma is rare—most cases don't show up until adulthood—but the number of kids diagnosed has been increasing almost 3 percent every year.

If all this news makes you want to grab your kids and move into a cave, don't panic: There's plenty you can do to keep them safe. The best protection is still lots of broad-spectrum sunscreen, which blocks both UVA and UVB rays. One study of more than 300 kids found that those who wore sunscreen whenever they were outside for more than 30 minutes developed significantly fewer moles than those who wore sunscreen sporadically or not at all. (The more moles a child has, the greater his lifetime risk of skin cancer.) Just as important: limiting the time your kids spend in the sun between 10 AM, and 4 P.M., and making sure they wear protective clothing, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses. We teamed up with experts from the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) to bring you real-world ways to protect your family without spoiling your summer.

EXPOSED! THE 5 MOST COMMON SUN MYTHS

MYTH My child won't get burned if she's wearing SPF 50.

TRUTH If you don't apply enough or if you don't reapply it—your child can still get burned. says Ann Haas, M.D., chair of the AAD's Youth Education Committee. The rule of thumb is to apply at least an ounce of sunscreen over your child's entire body: with spray sunscreens, make sure you saturate all of your child's skin.



You also need to put more product on your child every two hours and after she swims or sweats a lot. "The term 'waterproof' is misleading—all it means is that the sunscreen protects you for up to 80 minutes in the water," says Elizabeth McBurney, M.D., clinical professor of dermatology at Tulane University School of Medicine, in New Orleans. "But some will still wash off in the water and be rubbed off when your child dries off with a towel."

MYTH Getting a tan isn't dangerous.

REALITY Sunburns definitely increase the risk of developing melanoma, but your kids are still at risk of getting skin cancer even if they always get a golden tan. "We know now that the more sun your child gets, the more likely he or she is to develop basal-cell and squamous-cell skin cancers," says Dr. Eichenfield. "Any sign of color means that the skin has been damaged."

MYTH My child is inside for most of the day, so I don't have to worry.

TRUTH You may have to, especially on sunny days. Window glass only filters out UVB, so UVA can still penetrate your child's skin if she's standing nearby. "We used to think that only UVB rays were dangerous, but now we know that UVA rays also cause skin cancer," says Parents advisor Jody Alpert Levine, M.D., a pediatric dermatologist in New York City. When you're going on a long car ride, put sunscreen on your child's hands, forearms, and face before hitting the road. If her play area or desk is right near a window at home or at school, she should also wear sunscreen to reduce exposure.

MYTH My baby shouldn't wear sunscreen.

TRUTH You should keep your baby out of the sun, but there may be times when you can't avoid exposing her. The American Academy of Pediatrics says it's safe to use a small amount of sunscreen on an infant, but you should do a "patch test" the day before by putting a little on the inside of her wrist to check for irritation or allergies.

MYTH My child has to spend some time without sunscreen so he doesn't develop vitamin D deficiency.

TRUTH You've probably seen news reports about how we all need sunshine to help our bodies make this important nutrient. However, the AAD says that both kids and adults can get enough vitamin D through day-to-day sun exposure, multivitamins, and foods like milk and fortified orange juice. "Any healthy, active child who spends time playing outdoors is going to get more than enough sunlight for adequate vitamin D production," says Sandra Johnson, M.D., assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, in Little Rock. "Studies have also shown that people who wear sunscreen regularly don't suffer from vitamin D deficiency."

A HEALTHY DAY AT THE BEACH

8:00 Put broad-spectrum SPF 30 sunscreen on everyone a half hour before heading out. "You want to make sure you have enough time for the ingredients to penetrate the skin," says Dr. Johnson. Be sure to cover often-missed spots: the lips (with SPF 30 lip balm), ears, around the eyes, neck, hands, and feet.

8:30 Hit the beach before the sun's rays get too strong, says Andrea Cambio, M.D., a dermatologist in Cape Coral, Florida, (Bonus: You won't have to fight for a good spot on the sand.)

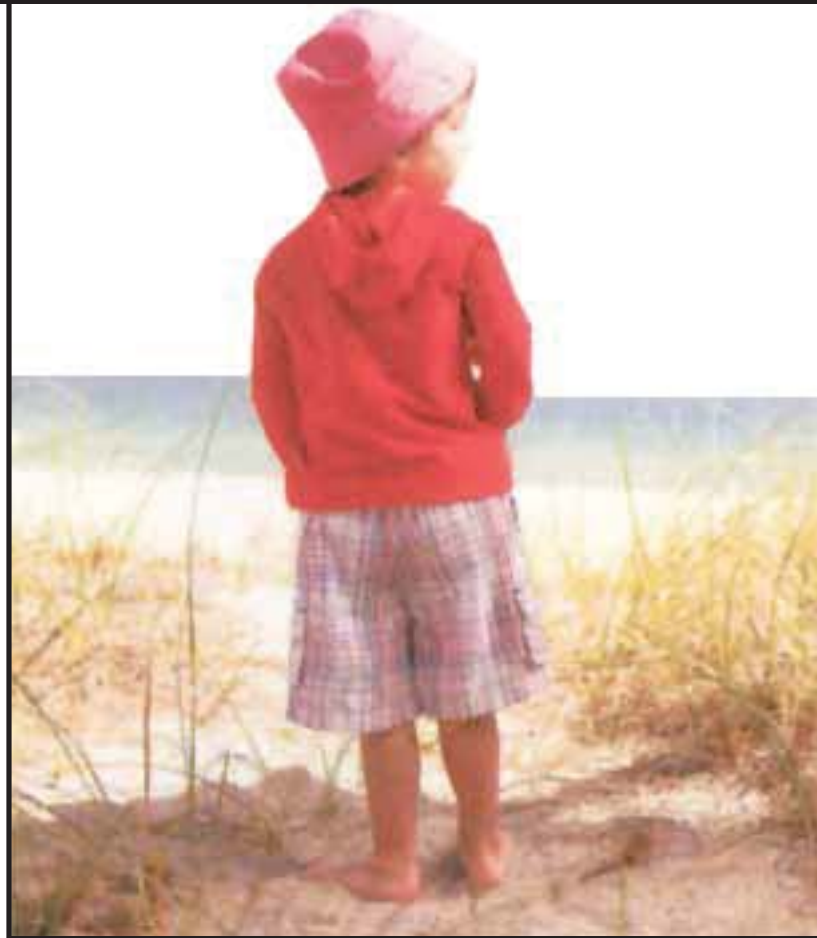
9:00 Everybody in the water! Choose a swimsuit for your child that offers maximum coverage and UV protection, like Coolibar's Neck-to-Knee Swimsuit. If she's wearing a regular suit, have her wear a sun-protective shirt. (Avoid white T-shirts, which are equivalent to only SPF 3 when wet.) Re-apply sunscreen after your kids swim.

10:00 The sun's getting intense, so duck under a beach umbrella and build sand castles.

But keep in mind that the sand under the umbrella reflects UV rays, so you're getting some exposure even in the shade.

12:00 Lunchtime. The sun is strongest between noon and 2:00, so take a break for a couple of hours, says Dr. Cambia. Eat lunch inside, head home or back to the hotel for a quick nap, play cards on a shady patio ... anything to get out of the sun.

2:00 Apply another coat of sunscreen before you head back outdoors. the midday sun is still strong, so spend as much



time as possible under your umbrella and make sure your child keeps his hat on. If you notice any redness on his skin, take him inside immediately.

4:00 The sun's rays are no longer at their peak, so now's a good time for a swim or walk along the beach. And remember: Just because the sun's not as strong doesn't mean you can't get burned. If it's been more than two hours, be sure to reapply that sunscreen.

DERM-TESTED TIPS

Can't get your kids to wear sunscreen or play in the shade? Here's advice from dermatologists who are moms.

I keep sunscreen in the bathroom, so in the morning after they brush their teeth, they apply sunscreen to their face. It's just part of their daily routine. —Jodi Alpert Levine, M.D., mom of four kids, ages 11, 8, 5, and 8 months

I make a big fuss over my 2-year-old grandson every time he puts his sunglasses on—I tell him how cool he looks, so he now loves to wear them. —Elizabeth McSurney, M.D., grandmother of two kids, ages 2 and 1

My two daughters love playing dress-up, so every year I let them pick out any hat they want as long as it has a wide brim that shields their face, back of neck, and ears. —Andrea Cambio, M.D., mom of two girls, ages 5 and 3

I use a sunscreen spray on my kids they like it more than creams, which they say feel greasy. On their face, I use a sun stick, which doesn't run into their eyes. —Sandra Johnson mom of two kids, ages 7 and 5

We always put up a pop-up tent in our backyard, so my kids could be outdoors but stay protected in the summer months. They also had a sandbox with a roof canopy. —Ann Haas, M.D., mom of two kids, ages 12 and 10