

# Shield Your Skin from the Summer Sun



We all know that excessive sun exposure increases your risk for harmful skin growths, but there are many misconceptions floating around about how to best protect yourself and those around you.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer, with over 3.5 million new cases in the US every year. One in five Americans will develop skin cancer at some point in their lifetime. Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer, and the US has an estimated 75,000 new cases of melanoma each year. The best way to prevent skin cancer is to protect your skin from harmful UV radiation from the sun.

## Sunscreen Quick Tips



When picking out a sunscreen, look for a product labeled “Broad Spectrum.” These products protect against both UVA (ultraviolet A) and UVB (ultraviolet B) rays, both of which can cause skin cancer.



Apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 half an hour before sun exposure.



One ounce of sunscreen is considered the appropriate amount to use each time you apply.



Reapply sunscreen every two hours, and immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.



Avoid direct sun exposure when UV rays are strongest – between 10am and 4pm.



Apply sunscreen even when it is cloudy out, as harmful UV rays are still reaching your body.



Take extra care around snow or bodies of water, as these reflect UV rays and increase the amount of UV radiation your skin receives.



Select a sunscreen that is “water-resistant” for 40 or 80 minutes. Sunscreen manufacturers can no longer claim that sunscreen is “waterproof” or “sweatproof” due to false advertising.



While spray sunscreen is faster to apply and makes it easier to target hard to reach areas or squirming children, many experts recommend using traditional lotion. Spray sunscreens make it difficult to identify missed areas, and may irritate lungs.



Be sure to check out the Environmental Working Group’s 2014 Sunscreen Guide at [www.ewg.org/2014sunscreen](http://www.ewg.org/2014sunscreen) to see how the sunscreen you use stacks up.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology ([www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org)), Environmental Working Group ([www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

## Know the ABCs of Skin Health

When checking your body regularly for moles, be sure to keep in mind your ABC(DE)s. Consult your dermatologist if you notice:

### Asymmetry

Is one half of the mole different from the other half?

### Border

Does the mole have an irregular or poorly defined border?

### Color

Does the color vary throughout the mole? Is it a combination of tan, brown, and black, possibly with white, blue or red?

### Diameter

Is the diameter greater or equal to 6mm, about the width of a pencil eraser?

### Evolving

Is the mole or spot changing in size, color, or shape over time?

If you see anything unusual, make an appointment with a dermatologist. Early detection is key. To learn more about skin cancer, visit [SpotSkinCancer.org](http://SpotSkinCancer.org).

