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# Tips For Protecting Your Skin

JULY 13TH 2012 BY AMY ELLINGHOUSE

Tips For Protecting Your Skin

## Missouri Southern Healthcare shares some Sun Safety tips!

### SUN 101

The sun can cause some very unhealthy and well-known problems, such as burns and cancer, but it also has other damaging effects, like weakening your immune system. Too much sun can also speed up the signs of aging. It is never too late to start wearing the right type of sunscreen and applying it correctly. Here are some quick tips for getting the most out of your sunscreen and staying healthier this summer, and all year long.

- Layer Your Sunscreen

Sunscreen manufacturers determine sun protection factor (SPF) in a laboratory setting. A heavy amount of sunscreen is applied for this test, far more than most people ever use at the beach. The reality is that an SPF 15 isn't really a 15 if you only apply a thin layer. Therefore, it is best to layer your sunscreen! Apply the lotion 30 minutes before exposing yourself to the sun. Let it dry down for at least 15 minutes, then reapply another coat just before your tennis match, mountain hike or other outdoor activity. That way, you'll have a fighting chance of achieving the full SPF rating and maximizing the potential UVA protection of your product.

- Look for UVA and UVB

The SPF number refers to the product's ability to block out UVB (burning) radiation but does not pertain to its ability to block dangerous UVA (aging) light. UVA rays destroy the skin's collagen and elastin, causing wrinkles and sagging. UVA also stimulates pigment-producing melanocytes to release brown melanin, resulting in "liver spots" on the face, hands and chest. And UVA can actually mutate your DNA, eventually leading to skin cancer. So, when shopping for sunscreen, it's important that you look for one with broad spectrum UVA/ UVB protection. Check the active ingredients label on the back of the box or tube to be certain you are getting adequate protection.

- Protect Yourself Year Round

Sunscreen should be applied daily. The daily use of a low-SPF sunscreen (15) has been shown to be more effective in preventing skin damage than the intermittent use of a higher SPF sunscreen. This goes for men too! Surveys show that 34% of men wear sunscreen, compared to 78% of women. Start protecting yourself now to reduce cumulative lifetime exposure to damaging UV radiation.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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