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Summer Sun Safety



Summer is here! Who doesn't want to be outside, swimming, sunbathing, hiking or just getting some fresh air? While summer does mean fun in the sun, it is important to NOT obtain too much sun. Overexposure to sun can lead to consequences including sunburns, premature aging of the skin, wrinkling, and skin cancer, including melanoma.

General Information

- Applying sunscreen is important due to the risk of sun damage and skin cancer.
- It is advisable to stay out of the sun when it is strongest (between 10am-4pm). The sun damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays penetrate clouds; this also applies to overcast days.
- Wearing protective clothing is another method to avoid the sun.
- Seek shade under an umbrella, tree or other shelter for additional protection.

Clothing

- Loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and long pants made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection from the sun's UV rays.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck.
- Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays, as well as reduce the risk of cataracts. They also protect the tender skin around the eyes.

Sunscreen

- Where skin is exposed on the body, sunscreen can be applied that provides both UVA ("A" for aging-causes damage below the skin surface) and UVB ("B" for burning) protection.
- A "broad-spectrum" sunscreen should be used, as it provides protection against both UVA and UVB rays.
- SPF stands for sun protection factor, which is a measure of how long it takes to burn versus not using sunscreen; it measures UVB only.
 - ❖ For example: a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 takes 15 times longer for skin to redden than without the sunscreen.
 - ❖ The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommends the choice of sunscreen products that have SPF of 30 or higher, broad-spectrum coverage, and water or sweat resistance.
- Apply sunscreen liberally prior to sun exposure, at least every two hours during exposure, and after getting the skin wet from swimming or sweating.
- The American Academy of Dermatology recommends sunscreens with any of the following ingredients: avobenzone, cinoxate, ecamsule, menthyl anthranilate, octyl methoxycinnamate, octyl salicylate, oxybenzone or sulisobenzene.
 - ❖ Oxybenzone may irritate some individual's skin, however this is not common.

References

-Baron ED. Selection of sunscreen and sun-protective measures. In: UpToDate, Post TW (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA. (Accessed on June 28, 2017.)

-http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm