

The Truth About Sunscreen

Seven facts that will set you straight for skin protection this summer

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By Anne K. Julian, PhD, Cancer Prevention Fellow, National Cancer Institute

With summer around the corner, smart sun-lovers are planning how to keep their skin safe from sunburn and skin cancer while enjoying the warmer weather. Here are some important facts about sunscreen that will have you loving your skin and the summer at the same time!

1. Sunscreen is protective. Sunscreen does protect your skin from the sun's rays, when used as directed. However, some research suggests that sunscreen users get burned frequently, which may be because they use too little, apply it/reapply it too late, or use it to engage in otherwise unsafe sun exposure, like staying out longer or not wearing protective clothing.
2. You have to use a lot. That means a shot glass full to cover the full body, a fourth to a half teaspoon for the face. Studies have shown that consumers use much less sunscreen than is needed to effectively protect, so use more than you think you need, or get a measuring spoon!
3. Don't use it solo; it's important to use a combination of sun safety approaches for effective sun protection. Sunscreen isn't an all-protective force field. It is intended to be combined with other sun-safety approaches, like covering up with clothing, staying in the shade, wearing a hat, and scheduling activities to avoid times of day when the sun is most intense (10AM - 4PM).
4. It doesn't have to be greasy. Recent advances in sunscreen technology have led to a variety of improved textures and consistencies of sunscreens, from sticks for those who like to roll it on, to light milks that spread easily and leave no white cast. The days of thick pastes are over, but you still need to apply a lot, so pick a product with a texture you really like!
5. It isn't just a girl thing. Few men look forward to having wrinkles, age spots, or discolored skin. Sunscreen isn't just a product for women; using sunscreen and other sun-safety strategies is critical for anyone looking to prevent the premature aging that comes with sun exposure—not to mention helping prevent skin cancer.
6. Coconut oil is not a good sunscreen. Although some sunscreens contain coconut oil, the oil itself is not adequate to prevent skin damage. Coconut oil may extend the time to burn for some individuals, but the level of UV protection is very low and may be highly variable by source, so

don't rely on coconut oil to protect your skin!

7. Sunscreen is NOT a “Do-It-Yourself” kind of product. Sunscreen is a non-prescription drug intended to protect the skin. You wouldn't strap your child in using a seatbelt you made at home, so why protect their skin with untested homemade sunscreen? If you're concerned about the safety of ingredients in sunscreen, there are other options. You can move your outdoor activities to morning or evening, when the sun is less intense, and cover up, wear a hat, stay in the shade, and use a store-bought, mineral-based sunscreen.

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[Learn more about sun safety.](#)

Show us your [#SunSafeSelfie](#) and join the conversation to raise awareness about the benefits of sun protection!

Photograph yourself using sun protection.

Post it on social media and tag it with [#SunSafeSelfie](#).

Practice what you post! (Plan ahead before outdoor activities, so you're always prepared to stay sun-safe.)

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