



AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Sunscreen 101: What to look for in sun protection for kids

UVA, UVB, SPF. Reading a sunscreen label can be like looking at a can of alphabet soup. Sunscreen labels now contain more information that can keep your family protected from sun damage. Here is what you should know.

When buying sunscreen, make sure the label says “broad spectrum.” This means that the ingredients protect skin from ultraviolet B (UVB) and ultraviolet A (UVA) sun rays. UVB and UVA rays can both cause sunburn, skin cancer and wrinkles. People who spend a lot of time in the sun without protecting their skin will get wrinkled skin earlier than if they had stayed out of the sun.

Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 to 50 (higher than 50 is not better). Make sure it is water resistant. No product is waterproof. After being in the water, sweating or towel drying, apply more sunscreen. The label on the bottle explains how often to reapply the sunscreen.

Also listed are the active ingredients that block sun damage. The active ingredient can protect the skin in one of two ways. A chemical ingredient absorbs UV radiation. Examples are dioxybenzone, methyl anthranilate, oxybenzone and sulisobenzene. A physical active ingredient reflects and absorbs sun before it can harm skin. Examples include zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Zinc oxide is the only ingredient that gives “extensive” protection against both UVA and UVB, according to the Food and Drug Administration.

Even if your sunscreen is broad spectrum, it does not protect skin from all harmful rays. Children are at higher risk because they have more years ahead of them. That’s why the American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents to teach children to protect their skin from the sun by wearing sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, and staying in the shade. Children who learn about sun protection at a young age can stay healthy for a lifetime.

— Trisha Koriath

| Drug Facts | |
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| Active Ingredients Avobenzone 3% Homosalate 10% Octyl methoxycinnamate 7.5% | Purpose Sunscreen |
| Uses • helps prevent sunburn • if used as directed with other sun protection measures (see <i>Directions</i>), decreases the risk of skin cancer and early skin aging caused by the sun | |
| Warnings For external use only Do not use on damaged or broken skin When using this product keep out of eyes. Rinse with water to remove. Stop use and ask a doctor if rash occurs Keep out of reach of children. If product is swallowed, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away. | |
| Directions • apply liberally 15 minutes before sun exposure • reapply: • after 40 minutes of swimming or sweating • immediately after towel drying • at least every 2 hours • Sun Protection Measures. Spending time in the sun increases your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging. To decrease this risk, regularly use a sunscreen with a broad spectrum SPF of 15 or higher and other sun protection measures including: • limit time in the sun, especially from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. • wear long-sleeve shirts, pants, hats, and sunglasses • children under 6 months: Ask a doctor | |
| Inactive ingredients aloe extract, barium sulfate, benzyl alcohol, carbomer, dimethicone, disodium EDTA, jojoba oil, methylparaben, octadecene/MA copolymer, polyglyceryl-3 distearate, phenethyl alcohol, propylparaben, sorbitan isostearate, sorbitol, stearic acid, tocopherol (vitamin E), triethanolamine, water | |
| Other information • protect this product from excessive heat and direct sun | |
| Questions or comments? Call toll free 1-800-XXX-XXXX | |