

Sun Protection for Every Age

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Your skin changes as you age, and so do the ways you need to protect it from the sun. A baby's skin, for instance, can be up to 30 percent thinner than an adult's, and as we reach middle age and beyond, the skin can thin and become increasingly sensitive. And since sun exposure can, over time, lead to skin cancer and premature skin aging, it is important for people of all ages – from infants to the elderly – to take the proper steps to mitigate those risks.

Here's how to protect yourself and loved ones of all ages from too much sun exposure.

Infants – Under six months, babies should be kept out of direct sunlight. Dress your baby in breathable clothing that covers the whole body and a hat. Consult your physician for sunscreen use in children six months.

Babies – Babies older than six months should still keep sun exposure to a minimum and should use broad-spectrum sunscreen (meaning it protects against UVA and UVB rays) when outdoors.

Toddlers – Be diligent about applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 every two hours with busy toddlers. Use water resistant formulas when your child is sweating or swimming.

School-age children – As kids go to school and participate in activities away from home, it is harder to make sure they are using sunscreen. Talk to children about sun safety at recess and during sports. Apply sunscreen at home and ask your child, teachers and coaches to make sure it is reapplied when they play outside.

Adults – Wearing sunscreen for outdoor activities is an obvious must. But because sun exposure can lead to skin aging and increases the risk of skin cancers, it's also a good idea to wear sunscreen for everyday activities including driving in your car or walking the dog. To minimize the effects of long-term sun exposure, using a daily moisturizer with SPF is a good everyday protection.

Older adults - Our skin gets thinner, drier and more vulnerable as we age. Regularly using a broad-spectrum sunscreen when outdoors is a must, and long sleeves and wide-brimmed hats are a good protective measure as well.

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