

# SUNSCREEN EXPLAINED

## SUNSCREEN

The sun has a dark side, in the form of harmful UVA and UVB rays. Everyone over the age of six months should be using a sunscreen daily in order to stay protected. Infants that are younger than six months should not be directly exposed to the sun at all. Damage from the sun and UV radiation can lead to premature aging of the skin as well as skin cancer. Using an everyday moisturizer with an SPF of 15 or higher is a good way to defend yourself from the risks associated with the sun. For prolonged periods of time in the sun like swimming, exercising and yard work, a sunscreen with a higher SPF is recommended.

## CORRECT USE

Improper application of sunscreen can actually leave you susceptible to sunburn and skin damage. To get the most protection, sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes before sun exposure. This allows the ingredients to fully bind to the skin. About 1 ounce should be used per application to fully cover the exposed parts of your body. Reapplication is just as important as putting it on in the first place, so reapply the same amount every two hours. If you have been swimming or sweating a great deal, immediately reapply sunscreen.

## COMMON MYTH

It's a common misperception that if it's cold or cloudy outside, you don't need sunscreen. This is untrue. The sun's ultraviolet radiation still reaches the earth even on completely cloudy days. On overcast days, when the weather is mild, people are more likely to spend all day outdoors with no protection and this often leads to the most serious sunburns.

## TAN IN A CAN

Being smart about sun protection will help keep you looking younger longer. For people that still want the sun-kissed look without sacrificing their skin, sunless tanning lotions and sprays are a safe option. Improvements in sunless products have made them easier to use and provide the desired bronze glow. Most of the self-tanning lotions are also available with sunscreen and can be used everyday for the gradual appearance of a natural tan. However, don't be misled by products like "tanning amplifiers", "tanning accelerators" and "tanning enhancers". Many of these products interact with the sun to create a tan, so they are actually accentuating the damage done to the skin. As a final word of caution; avoid tanning beds completely. A recent study from Dartmouth Medical School found that tanning device users were twice as likely to develop skin cancer.

