



Skin safety

The skin is your body's largest organ. It protects your internal organs from environmental irritants, infections, and ultraviolet light. Take good care of your skin so it can do its job. Keep your skin clean and protect it from injury.



PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM SUN DAMAGE

Do you look forward to semester breaks so you can relax in the sun and get a tan? Many students do. A suntan may look good, but it is a sign that your skin is trying to protect itself from damage. Be especially careful not to get sunburned. It can lead to premature aging, wrinkling of the skin, and skin cancer. (Be extra cautious if you have a family history of skin cancer.) Even if you are not concerned about these problems now, the pain and blisters that come with a severe sunburn can make spring break unbearable.

The risk for sunburn is increased for persons with fair skin, blue eyes, red or blond hair, and for persons taking some medicines. These include birth control pills; some antibiotics, such as tetracycline and sulfa drugs; and anti-histamines, such as Benedryl and cetirizine.



PREVENT SUNBURN

- Avoid exposure to the midday sun (10 a.m. to 4 p.m. standard time or 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. daylight saving time).
- Use broad spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more when exposed to the sun. This will help protect you from both UVA and UVB rays. Apply the sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before you go out in the sun. Use about 2 tablespoons to adequately cover all exposed body parts. Reapply sunscreen every 60 to 90 minutes, even if the sunscreen is water-resistant.
- Along with sunscreen, use moisturizers, makeup, lip balm, etc. that contain sunscreen. Use water-based ones if you have acne.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or shade hat. A shade hat looks like a ball cap with fabric draping down the sides and back. Wear long-sleeved rash guards or swim shirts.
- Wear clothing with sunscreen protection built in, if possible.
- Wear sunglasses that absorb at least 90% of both UVA and UVB rays.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible.