



YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN CHARGE
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Junior Editor's Report

The Importance of Using Sunscreen

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Who doesn't enjoy lying on the beach on a sunny day? Many families travel during the summer under the scorching sun. While the sun in many ways helps keep us warm and supports vegetation growth, excessive sun exposure can have harmful health effects, including skin cancer. Because of this, sunscreen was invented.

Prolonged interaction with ultraviolet (UV) radiation, such as tanning or being at the beach, is a key risk factor for skin cancer. UV radiation, considered to be a carcinogen, is emitted through natural energy produced by the rays of the sun. Your eyes cannot see UV light because its wavelengths are shorter than visible light on the electromagnetic spectrum, but your skin can feel it.

The two main UV radiations that are linked to skin cancer and immune system weakness are ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB). Both do harm but differ in the way they affect the skin. UVA rays are related to skin aging because they penetrate deep into the skin due to the fact that they have a longer wavelength, and we do not get the additional protection we would receive if they were absorbed by the ozone layer. On the other hand, UVB rays have shorter wavelengths, that are to an extent absorbed by the ozone layer, and cause skin burning.

Being exposed to UVA and UVB radiation without protection over time will destroy the DNA in skin cells, leading to genetic abnormalities, or mutations that can contribute to skin cancer. UV radiation exposure can also be a cause of cataracts and eyelid cancers.

Most people recognize the benefits of layering on sunscreen during the heat of summer in order to not get sunburned. However, when it comes to spending time outdoors in the winter, people often neglect to apply sunscreen. It is important to apply sunscreen both in summer and winter, because UV radiation is everywhere. Despite the fact that you are not seeing it, its effects on your skin will show over time.

In the winter, snow, and ice strengthen sunlight reflection of UVA and UVB radiation, increasing skin damage. When the temperature of the earth is very low the ozone layer is at its thinnest. You're exposed to greater-intensity UV rays because your skin barrier is now more vulnerable. Regardless of the risks, you can enjoy the outdoors by protecting your skin with broad-spectrum sunscreen. Sunscreen protects your skin in two ways, either by reflecting or absorbing the UV rays. Depending on your skin type and where you live, you should do your research and determine what type of sunscreen will benefit you the most.

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Physical sunscreens (sometimes called “natural or mineral” sunscreens) are those that include two ingredients: zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. They work by forming a protective barrier on the skin that reflects UV rays. Chemical sunscreens which are thinner and need to be absorbed into the skin, on the other hand, absorb the UV rays, convert them into heat, and then release them from the body.

Hopefully, you're now convinced about wearing sunscreen all year. Even though it might be tedious to apply and reapply sunscreen, in the long run, you will be protecting your skin. Another benefit is that you may ultimately look younger as you age. Wear sunscreen and stay protected!