

Sun Injury & Protection

Love the sunshine but hate the burn? Sarasota's endless sun makes cycling a joy—but it also puts our skin at risk. Sun damage is cumulative: a few hours each ride, week after week, adds up. Effects range from sunburn (hours later) to wrinkles and skin cancer (years later).

Why It Matters

- UV rays (UVA & UVB) cause tanning, wrinkles, and DNA damage that can lead to skin cancer.
- Risk factors: fair skin, light hair/eyes, family history, tanning bed use, smoking, immune suppression, certain meds.
- Older adults face higher risks due to decades of exposure.

Best Protection = Clothing

If UV rays can't reach your skin, they can't harm you. Good choices:

- Cycling caps (scalp + neck protection, visor helps too)
- Longer jerseys (better back/arm coverage, many with UPF fabric)
- Sun sleeves/leg covers (affordable, breathable, add visibility)
- Sunglasses (protect eyes + reduce glare)

Tips: choose tight-weave fabrics, bright/shiny colors, and UPF-rated clothing (30+). Wash gently to keep sun protection intact.

Watch the UV Index

Check your weather app—it's a 1–11+ scale. In Sarasota, UV often hits 10+ from April–August. At those levels, fair skin can burn in 15 minutes or less without protection.

■ Next column: Sunscreen creams & lotions.

Questions or ideas? Contact me at josephson.richard@gmail.com.

■ Quick Sun Protection Tips for Cyclists

1. **Cover Up** – Caps, longer jerseys, and sun sleeves (UPF 30+).
2. **Check the UV Index** – 8+ means burn risk in 15 minutes or less.
3. **Update Your Gear** – Old, stretched, or worn fabric loses protection.

■ *If the sun can't reach your skin, it can't hurt you!*