

Pop quiz

1. If you're planning to spend time outside, you should apply sunscreen:

- a) An hour before you leave
- b) A half hour before leaving
- c) As soon as you step out your front door

Answer B If you use sunscreen with a physical blocker (see page 36), you *could* wait until you're outdoors to apply, since these have immediate effects. But sunscreens with chemical blockers require time for ingredients to work, so play it safe and apply all sunscreens a half hour before leaving your house.

2. You should reapply waterproof sunscreen:

- a) Every 4 hours
- b) Every 2 to 3 hours
- c) Every 90 minutes

Answer C All sunscreens become less effective after about two hours—even waterproof ones. To make sure everyone stays covered, reapply every 90 minutes, especially after you've been swimming (or sweating) or doing something that can wipe off sunscreen, like inner-tubing or toweling off.

3. How much sunscreen should you put on your kids?

- a) Enough to fill a shot glass
- b) Enough to fill a teaspoon
- c) Enough to fill the palm of their hand

Answer C The American Academy of Dermatology recommends that adults use an ounce of sunscreen to cover their entire body (enough to fill a shot glass). Kids should get about half that, but to make sure you're using enough, use as much as you can fit into the palm of their hand.

Cover up

Think that T-shirt protects your kid from UV rays? Think again. A white T-shirt has an SPF of about 7, but once it gets wet, SPF drops down to about 3, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.

"In general, the easiest way to test if a fabric can protect your skin is to hold it up to the light—if you can see through it, then UV radiation can penetrate it," says Dr. Weinstock. This means you need to apply sunscreen underneath the clothes (and don't forget wide-brimmed hats to shield the face and eyes). Also consider using a laundry aid such as **SunGuard**, which blocks about 96 percent of UV rays when washed into regular clothes.

You might also try some treated SPF clothing. A few of our favorites: **Cabana Life** (cabanalife.com), **MaxOut** (maxoutswimwear.com), **DaRiMi Kidz** (darimikidz.com), and **Solumbra** (sunprecautions.com).

4. The minimum SPF you need is:

- a) 50
- b) 30
- c) 15

Answer B An SPF 15 blocks out only 93 percent of the sun's harmful rays, compared to 97 percent for an SPF 30 and 98 percent for an SPF 50, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. But once you get past SPF 30, it makes little difference.

5. When does sunscreen expire?

- a) After a year
- b) After three years
- c) Never

Answer B Unless the expiration date says otherwise, sunscreen lasts for up to three years. If, however, you consistently leave the bottle in your car on hot summer days, the heat will cause the sunscreen compounds to break down, which means your sunscreen won't last as long.

Sources: Audrey Kunin, M.D., founder of DERMAdoctor; Anthony Mancini, M.D., head of pediatric dermatology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, Children's Memorial Hospital, in Chicago; Darrell Rigel, M.D., professor of dermatology at New York University; Julie Schaffer, M.D., director of pediatric dermatology at New York University; Michael Smith, M.D., associate professor of medicine and pediatrics in the division of dermatology at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville



Melanoma

Is your child at risk?

Between 1973 and 2001, childhood melanoma cases increased almost 3 percent every year. The good news is that melanoma in kids is still rare: In children under 10, the incidence is one in a million. "There's no need to be alarmed by every skin imperfection in your child, but if you have a family history, your child is fair and/or has a lot of moles, make sure she gets skin exams with a dermatologist," says Susan Chon, M.D., assistant professor of dermatology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. ■

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