

Sunscreens

Sunscreens are very useful in preventing ultraviolet light from penetrating the skin. One can avoid not only sunburn, but the possibility of developing skin cancers from sun exposure. Most of the common sunscreens contain para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA). PABA is a very effective blocker of the ultraviolet sunlight, which produces sunburn and skin cancers. Some patients who use PABA will become allergic to it. Therefore, an alternative sunscreen will be recommended.

PABA Free Sunscreens:

Vanicream 30, 35, 50 & 60

Eucerine 30, 50

Cetaphil 15, 30, & 50

Pre-Sun: Pre-Sun 28; Ultra 30; Pre-Sun Spray 27; Gel or Cream 15 & 30; Sensitive 28

Neutrogena 30, 55, 70, & 100

Coppertone 15, 30, 45, 50, 60, 70 & 100

Coppertone Kids: Spray 50 & 70; Lotion 50 & 70

Cera Ve 30, 45, 50 and Baby 45

Total Block (thick) 60 & 65

*Some are sold through Internet

Helpful Hints

- Gels are less oily, less likely to cause acne reactions
- Choose an SPF of at least 30
- Choose Full spectrum protection (UVA and UVB)
- Consider if you need a waterproof type (swimming, exercising)
- Apply thickly and reapply every few hours of exposure
- If skin is oily, use a gel (Sol Bar, Pre-sun)
- Higher SPF, may cause irritation or allergy
- SPF maximum is 50. Any SPF higher may mislead the consumer to be exposed longer in the sun which would lead to higher risk of skin damage
- Don't forget lips! Use lip balm with SPF
- Cover up! Use hats, shirts and sunglasses

Facts

- Before 10am and after 3pm the intensity is less of UVA and UVB
- Mild cloud cover gives little protection from sunburn
- Tanning booths use mainly UVA which may not burn, but contributes to age related skin changes and skin cancer
- High altitudes increases exposure, reflection from sun, water, and sand can sunburn
- "Sunless" tanning solutions that "stain" the skin do not protect from sunburn
- Ultraviolet rays cause cataracts. Use sunglasses with UV filtering
- Spray sunscreens do not provide adequate coverage. They also have a fine mist and might be accidentally inhaled

****Have Vitamin D levels checked by your PCP