



Family Service EAP . . . Your Bridge Between Home and Work
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SUMMER SUN

Protection from sun exposure is important all year round, not just in the summer. Ultraviolet (UV) rays can reach you on cloudy and hazy days, as well as bright sunny days. UV rays also reflect off of surfaces like water, cement, sand, and snow. The hours between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. are the most hazardous for UV exposure in the continental United States. UV rays are the greatest during the late spring and early summer in North America.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) recommends 1) using sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, 2) wear clothing that covers skin, 3) wear hats, 4) wear sunglasses, and 5) stay in the shade.



1) Sunscreen: The sun's UV rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. Put on sunscreen before you go outside, even on slightly cloudy or cool days. Don't forget to put a thick layer on all parts of exposed skin. Get help for hard-to-reach places like your back.

- **How sunscreen works.** Sunscreen contains chemicals that interact with the skin to protect it from UV rays. All products do not have the same ingredients; if your skin reacts badly to one product, try another or call a doctor.
- **SPF.** Sunscreens are assigned a sun protection factor (SPF) number that rates their effectiveness in blocking UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. You should use a sunscreen with at least SPF 15.
- **Reapplication.** Sunscreen wears off. Put it on again if you stay out in the sun for more than two hours and after you swim or do things that make you sweat.
- **Expiration date.** Check the sunscreen's expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years, but its shelf life is shorter if it has been exposed to high temperatures.
- **Cosmetics.** Some make-up and lip balms contain some of the same chemicals used in sunscreens. If they do not have at least SPF 15, don't use them by themselves.

2) Clothing: Loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and long pants made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection from the sun's UV rays. A wet T-shirt offers much less UV protection than a dry one. Darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors. If wearing this type of clothing isn't practical, at least try to wear a T-shirt or a beach cover-up. Keep in mind that a typical T-shirt has an SPF rating lower than 15, so use other types of protection as well.

3) Hats: For the most protection, wear a hat with a brim all the way around that shades your face, ears, and the back of your neck. A tightly woven fabric, such as canvas, works best. If you wear a baseball cap, you should also protect your ears and the back of your neck by wearing clothing that covers those areas or using sunscreen.

4) Sunglasses: Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts. They also protect the skin around your eyes. Sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection. Most sunglasses sold in the United States meet this standard. Wrap-around sunglasses work best as they block UV rays from sneaking in from the side.

5) Shade: You can reduce your risk of skin damage and skin cancer by seeking shade under an umbrella, tree, or other shelter before you need relief from the sun. Your best bet to protect your skin is to use sunscreen or wear protective clothing when you're outside—even when you're in the shade.

For more information, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention

If you have any questions about this topic, or if you wish to discuss a personal situation you may be experiencing, we invite you to contact your Family Service Employee Assistance Program (EAP). All contact between you and your EAP is confidential.

Contact us at: 1-800-683-9544 • EAP@familyserviceinc.com • www.familyserviceinc.com/EAP

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