

Sun Safety

(NAPSA)—Most of us only think of sun protection when we are heading to the beach or the pool, but most sun damage occurs when we are outside doing daily activities. If you have fair skin, moles on your body or a family history of skin cancer, unprotected sun exposure may be putting your life at risk.

“Even obtaining a ‘healthy glow’ or tan is a sign of skin damage,” said David Wilcox, MD, of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). “Most children get 50 percent to 80 percent of their lifetime sun exposure before age 18.”

ACEP wants to remind you to protect yourself and your family from the dangers of the sun by taking some practical precautions.

Avoid High Risk Times

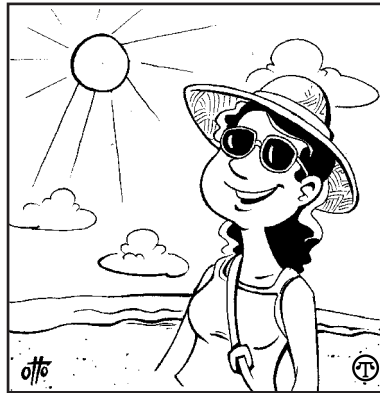
First, consider staying indoors when the sun is highest overhead and therefore at its strongest. In the Northern Hemisphere, the sun is usually at its peak between 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Cover Up

The most effective way to protect your skin from the sun’s harmful rays is to cover up before heading outdoors. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, choose light-colored clothing such as white to reflect the most sunlight and to keep you cool. The material of the clothes you select should not be sheer, but be able to screen out sunlight. Cover your eyes by choosing sunglasses with UV protection.

Apply Sunscreen

Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before heading outdoors, and use it liberally. Use a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15, especially for children 6 months and older. Check the sunscreen label to make sure it protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Reapply sunscreen every two



hours, or after swimming or heavy perspiring. Babies younger than six months should not use sunscreen and should be kept out of the sun as much as possible.

Avoid Heat Illness

Young children and the elderly are most at risk for heat illness, but it can affect anyone. The risk of heat illness increases in hot and humid weather, during heavy exertion, and dehydration. Be alert for symptoms of heat illness, including fainting, dizziness, headache, rapid pulse, flushed skin, and an increasing body temperature.

If You Are Burned:

Do not itch or peel loose skin. Take a cool (not cold) bath, or apply cool, wet compresses. If necessary, take a pain reliever such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Apply topical moisturizing creams to soothe discomfort and rehydrate the skin. Do not use petroleum-based products because they prevent heat and sweat from escaping. Avoid first-aid products that contain benzocaine, which can cause skin irritation or allergy. Keep in the shade until your sunburn has healed. If blisters develop, see a doctor.

For more information on injury prevention visit ACEP’s Web site at ACEP.org.