



FROM THE OFFICE OF DR.

How to avoid damaging ultraviolet light

Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation—whether accidental or to acquire a tan—raises your risk of skin cancer and sun-related aging of the skin. Here are some basic steps to take to avoid UV damage:

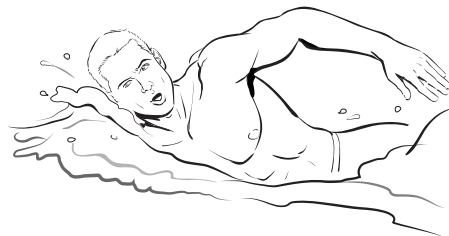
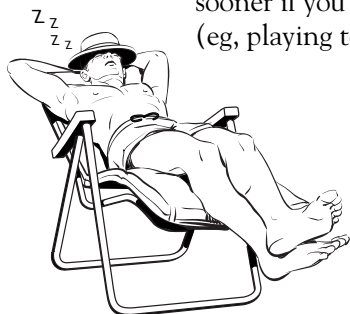
- Seek shade or minimize your sun exposure between 10 AM and 4 PM, when the sun's rays are the most intense. Wear protective clothing such as a wide-brimmed hat and long sleeves. Wear UV-blocking sunglasses. Whenever possible, keep children under 6 months old out of direct sunlight.



- Apply sunscreen to minimize UV damage when out in the sun. Choose a sunscreen that is **broad-spectrum** and **water-resistant** and with a sun protection factor—or SPF—of at least **30**. This can be used all year long, regardless of your age or whether or not you are “fair-skinned.”

- Apply sunscreen to exposed dry skin 10–15 minutes before going out into the sun. The amount to use for an adult is about 2 tablespoons. Wear sunscreen even when the sky is overcast, as UV rays penetrate clouds and windows (unless the windows are treated to block UV light). Also, take cover and use sunscreen around water, sand, and snow: they reflect UV radiation.

- Sunscreen is only effective for a limited time. Be sure to reapply sunscreen every 2 hours, or even sooner if you have been swimming or sweating heavily (eg, playing tennis or volleyball).



- Don't abuse sunscreen lotions. Don't apply sunscreen so that you can stay longer in the sun—for example, in order to tan. They are not intended to let you stay in the sun for long periods. Long exposure to the sun's damaging UV rays increases your risk of skin cancer and photoaging.

- Do not use tanning beds. They expose the skin to much larger amounts of damaging UV light than normal sun exposure. The American Dermatologic Association supports a ban on tanning beds, and the World Health Organization classifies them as carcinogenic.



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