

Health & Environment

Connection



A publication of LocalMotion, a non-profit organization dedicated to "Better Health through Fewer Toxins"

Summer Skin Savvy

SUNSCREEN

We need 15-20 minutes each day of sunlight in order for our skin to manufacture sufficient Vitamin D. If you plan to be in the sun for longer, sunscreen can protect your skin.

REMEMBER

- **Protect against both UVA and UVB** rays;
- **SPF** (sunburn protection factor) refers to protection only against UVB. No FDA label requirement exists for UVA rays;
- **UVA** rays are longer; they penetrate deeper; they do not burn, but can cause long-term damage such as wrinkles, skin aging, and skin cancer.

WHEN SHOPPING

- **Look for zinc oxide or titanium dioxide** in the ingredients to protect against both UVA and UVB;
- **Beware of claims** such as Broad-spectrum (check ingredients), Waterproof (some are water-resistant; none are waterproof), All day protection (effectiveness depends on use), or Chemical-free. No FDA standard exists for these terms;
- **Be cautious** of oxybenzone (benzophenone-3) and octinoxate (octylmethoxycinnamate), which penetrate the skin and in studies have increased free radical formation during UV light exposure. A 2008 study links prenatal exposure to oxybenzone to low birth weight in girls (ehponline.org);
- **Avoid** harmful preservatives and additives such as parabens, fragrance, BHA, BHT, DEA, and TEA;
- **Visit www.cosmeticdatabase.com/sunscreens** for a Top 10 list of sunscreens, brands to shop for, a database and more.

WHEN IN THE SUN

- **Lay it on thick.** To achieve full SPF protection of the label, apply about 1 oz. per application for the average adult (enough to fill a shot glass);
- **Reapply** after 2 hours. This does not extend the time safely spent in the sun; it simply helps maintain protection;
- **Minimize your exposure** 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. when the sun's rays are most intense;
- **Wear broad rimmed hats** and other protective clothing to help shield against UV rays;
- **Keep children** under 6 months out of direct sun.

INSECT REPELLANT

REMEMBER

- **DEET is a pesticide** linked to rashes, fevers, seizures, and death. It is found to have neurotoxic effects;
- **Children under 1** and pregnant or nursing moms should not use DEET;
- **American Academy of Pediatrics** warns that repeated application may increase potential toxic effects of DEET.

OUT AND ABOUT

- **Look for eucalyptus oil or soy oil** in the ingredients. Lemon eucalyptus repellants such as those by Fite Bite and Repel have been shown to last about 2 hours. Soy-based products such as HOMES' Bite Blocker protect for over 1 hour. Other brands include All Terrain Herbal Armor, Burt's Bees, Dschungel Juice, Green Ban, Lakon Herbals Bygone Bugz,...;
- **Avoid sunscreen/ insect repellent blends.** Sunscreen may increase the absorption of the insecticide. One may need to be applied more often than the other or at different times of day;
- **Wear long sleeves** and pants at dawn and dusk;
- **Beware of insecticide-laden clothes** found at outdoor/ sporting apparel stores/ catalogs. Insect Shield, the most popular line, contains permethrin which Duke University researchers have found can cause alterations in the brain and nervous system. It's harmful effects increase when used together with DEET. Children are most susceptible.

IN YOUR YARD

- **Repair or replace torn screens;**
- **Reduce mosquito habitat.** Frequently change water in pet dishes and bird baths; empty standing water in plant pots and pool and boat covers; drill holes in tire swings and recycling bins; repair clogged or sagging gutters; cover garbage cans; store canoes and small boats upside down;
- **Prevent mosquito larva** from developing by using B.t.i., a strain of bacteria specifically effective against mosquitoes, blackflies, and certain midges. Add products such as Mosquito Dunks to unused swimming pools, backyard ponds, and other areas with standing water;
- **Avoid bug zappers.** They kill more beneficial insects than mosquitoes.