What’s Up, Doc?
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Sun protection for kids

Kids love summertime and outdoor play! Outdoor play has many physical and emotional benefits for children. Sunlight is also essential for synthesis of vitamin D, which is important for bone development. However, ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight is responsible for several detrimental effects on human skin, including sunburn, photoaging (wrinkles and age spots) and skin cancer.

To protect your kids from these potential harms, we recommend sunscreen, sun-protective clothing, and avoiding too much sun exposure during peak hours of UV exposure (between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.) Keep infants and young children in the shade as much as possible when outside; sun umbrellas and tents can come in handy if natural shade is not available.

When choosing a sunscreen for your child, we recommend one that protects from both UV types A and B, and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. Sunscreen should be applied 15 to 30 minutes before sun exposure to allow the formation of a protective film on the skin AND reapplied every two hours.

Sunscreens are safe on kids, and there is no evidence of harmful effects from absorption through the skin. However, sunscreens can sometimes cause an allergic reaction or irritant contact dermatitis (rash). Products made specifically for babies or kids are often less likely to irritate the skin.