



Protecting Your Child's Skin from the Sun
by Carrie Danner, MD

Kids of all ages love to play outside, and it's a great way to stay active, but we need to take precautions to keep our skin healthy. Most exposure to the sun occurs during childhood years, and sun exposure in childhood increases a child's risk of having skin cancer as an adult. Early sunburns have the highest risk of leading to adult skin cancer.

The best way to limit the sun's damage is to avoid it as much as possible. Avoid being in the sun from 10 am - 4 pm when the sun's rays are the strongest. For babies less than 6 months old, keep them in the shade and out of the sun at all times if possible. Dress all children and yourself in lightweight, cool, comfortable clothing. Use a fabric with a tight weave which will block more rays than a looser weave, such as swim shirts and shorts and clothing that advertises an SPF factor. Be sure to include a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses with 99% UVA/UVB protection.

How do I choose the right sunscreen?

In addition to the mentioned protection, it is important to use sunscreen. Any time your child is outside for more than a few minutes, use SPF 15 or higher with broad spectrum coverage for both UVA and UVB.

- Apply at least 15 minutes before going outside and longer if going into water.
- Remember to apply generously, at least one ounce per sitting for a teenager and half an ounce for a small child.
- Even if the sunblock says it is sweat proof/waterproof/lasts 8 hours, it is best to reapply after getting out of the water, sweating heavily, or every few hours to be safe.

And remember, even though it is cloudy, UV rays travel through clouds, so it's best to wear sunscreen for any period of time outdoors to protect your child's skin. Be extra careful around water, snow, and sand, as they can reflect the sun's rays and increase UV exposure.

For infants under 6 months old, the best sun protection is avoidance. However, if they must be out in the sun, a small amount of sunscreen can be applied to exposed areas. Avoid applying near the eyes. If some gets in the eyes, wipe eyes and hands with a cool, damp cloth. If your infant has sensitive skin, try a gentle brand with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide, or a product made especially for babies or sensitive skin. If a rash develops, check with your child's pediatrician.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Cedar Park Pediatric and Family Medicine

Appointments: (512) 336.2777

Main Office: 345 Cypress Creek Rd., Ste. 104 Cedar Park, Texas 78613

920 N Vista Ridge Blvd., Ste. 500 Cedar Park, Texas 78613

www.cedarparkdoctors.com