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## **Sunscreen Protection**

### **What are sunscreens?**

Sunscreens are chemical or physical agents that help prevent the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation from reaching the skin. There are two types of UV rays: UVA and UVB. Both can harm your skin. UVA rays can pass through window glass and penetrate deeply into the skin layers, contribute to premature signs of aging, including fine lines/wrinkles, and play a part in the formation of skin cancer with frequent or intense exposure. UVB rays penetrate the outer layer of skin causing damage to skin cells, cause sunburns and tanning that increase the risk of skin cancer and vary with seasons and time of day.

### **What is SPF (sun protection factor)?**

SPF is a measure of a sunscreen's ability to prevent UVB from damaging the skin. Here's how it works: If it takes 20 minutes for unprotected skin to start turning red, applying a SPF 15 sunscreen will take 15 times longer for your skin to begin to burn than it would without sunscreen. SPF in the U.S. currently does not measure protection from UVA.

### **What type of sunscreen should I use?**

Apply a generous layer to skin that will not be covered by clothing. A broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen offering protection against both UVA and UVB rays is recommended. Use an SPF 30 or higher sunscreen on skin that receives daily sun exposure that also has adequate UVA protection. If your skin is sensitive, use sunscreens containing the minerals titanium dioxide or zinc oxide instead of chemically absorbing sunscreen ingredients. It is also recommended that you protect your skin by wearing long sleeves, pants, sunglasses and a wide brimmed hat whenever possible.

### **How much sunscreen do I apply and how often should I apply?**

Chemical sunscreens should be applied 30 minutes before sun exposure to allow the ingredients to fully bind to the skin. Physical sunscreens do not have the delayed onset of action. Reapply the same amount every two hours. Sunscreens should be reapplied immediately after swimming, toweling off, or sweating. To protect your lips, apply lip balm containing sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Sunglasses or hats should be used to protect the eyes as well. Harmful UV rays can penetrate your skin on cloudy days; therefore, applying sunscreen on these days is recommended.