



Sun Safety for Children: What Parents Should Know

Pediatric Patient Education Handout

Why Is Sun Safety Important?

Too much sun exposure can damage the skin and increase the risk of sunburn, skin damage, and skin cancer later in life. Children's skin is especially sensitive, so sun protection should start early and continue year-round.

How the Sun Affects Skin

The sun gives off ultraviolet (UV) rays that can harm the skin even on:

- Cloudy days
- Cool days
- Days spent in water or snow

Sun damage can happen quickly, especially in infants and young children.

Sun Safety Tips for Kids

Use Sunscreen

- Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen (protects against UVA and UVB rays)
- Use SPF 30 or higher
- Apply sunscreen 15–30 minutes before going outside
- Reapply every 2 hours, and after swimming or sweating

For babies under 6 months: Avoid direct sun when possible. Use shade and protective clothing first; small amounts of sunscreen may be used on exposed areas if needed.

Wear Protective Clothing

- Long sleeves and pants when possible
- Wide-brimmed hats that cover the face, ears, and neck
- UV-protective sunglasses to protect the eyes

Seek Shade

- Stay in the shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest
- Use umbrellas, tents, or trees when outdoors

Be Extra Careful Around Water, Sand, and Snow

These surfaces reflect sunlight and can increase sun exposure, even in shaded areas.

Avoid Tanning

- Tanning beds are not safe for children or teens
- A tan is a sign of skin damage, not health

Signs of Sunburn

Call your pediatric provider if your child has:

- Red, painful skin
- Blistering
- Fever, chills, or dehydration after sun exposure

Important Reminders for Parents

- Sun protection is important all year long, not just in summer
- Even one severe sunburn in childhood increases skin cancer risk later in life
- Make sun safety part of your child's daily routine

Our Recommendation

We encourage families to practice sun safety every day to help protect children's skin now and in the future. Please contact our office with any questions!