



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at National Insurance Services, Inc.

As UV rays continue to get stronger, teaching kids “sun smart” habits now can help keep them safe into the future. Sunscreen is not intended to increase sun exposure time, but rather to provide protection during periods of unavoidable sun exposure.

CHILDREN’S HEALTH: UV PROTECTION

Most exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays happens before age 18. This is why experts strongly recommend that children, toddlers and infants receive the same level, or higher, of UV protection as adults.

Limiting Exposure

Protect a child’s skin from the sun every day, especially during the peak hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Children less than one year of age should never be exposed to intense, direct sunlight, as they are especially sensitive to UV radiation and heat. Here are some helpful tips for UV protection:

- Try to ensure that children’s preschool or school schedules keep them indoors as much as possible during peak hours.
- Schedule sports and other outdoor activities early in the morning or late in the afternoon or evening. It is important not to reduce your child’s overall exercise in doing so, however.
- Don’t overlook natural shade. Is there a play area in a shady spot?
- Keep children covered with clothing that provides protection from the sun. Closely-woven materials, long-sleeved shirts and pants are best. Broad-brimmed hats are also recommended, but avoid caps that do not shade the ears or the back of the neck.
- Remember to protect children on cloudy days. Most damaging UV rays penetrate light cloud cover and haze.

Sunscreen

- When out in the sun for any length of time, children should use a sunscreen lotion with an SPF of 30 or more with UVA protection.
- For best results, sunscreen should be applied 15 minutes

before exposure to the sun, so it is absorbed by the skin and less likely to rub or wash off. Reapply it every couple of hours.

- For children wearing bathing suits, make sure that sunscreen is applied up to and under the edges of the suit to protect sensitive areas like the upper thighs and chest. Pay particular attention to the tops of feet and the backs of the knees.
- Note that sunscreens become less effective over time. Check expiration dates before using old sunscreen and replace if outdated.

Sunglasses

The same UV rays that harm the skin can also cause injury to the eyes. Most brands are effective at screening or reflecting at least some UV light. Here are some tips for picking the right pair for your child:

- Look for lenses providing a minimum of 90 percent protection from UVA and 95 percent protection from UVB light.
- Look for large-size lenses, glasses that fit snugly or a wraparound design to help cut down on damaging UV rays that can easily leak in around the edges of poorly fitting sunglasses.