



This summer has been hot! With the sweltering weather it is important to protect yourself from the harmful, invisible rays of the sun that can cause both sunburns and skin cancer. These rays include Ultraviolet A (UVA) and Ultraviolet B (UVB). Proper understanding and use of sunscreen is critical to avoid both short and long term problems. Here are a few tips to make sure you have a sun-safe summer!

1. If you have to be in the sun, any exposed part of your body including your scalp is at risk to absorbing UVA and UVB rays. Be sure to look for and apply sunscreen that blocks both types of rays or cover up exposed areas with clothing.
2. The sunscreen should have a Sun Protection Factor of at least 15. Regardless of the tone or color of your skin, this level will block the most harmful rays.
3. You are still susceptible to UV rays on cloudy days so when planning to be outside, apply sunscreen on thirty (30) minutes before you leave.
4. Even with water-resistant sunscreens, studies have shown their effectiveness to decrease rapidly throughout the day, regardless of how much time you are in the water. Apply your sunscreen every two hours to ensure maximal coverage.
5. Be cautious about spending too much time on or near surfaces that reflect UV rays including water and sand (and snow in the winter).
6. Tanning beds have UV light that can cause skin cancer. Consider using other methods for getting the look you want including sunless tanning products including sprays or lotions.
7. The greatest time for sun exposure during the day is from 10am – 4pm. If you have sensitive skin or have children consider activities in shaded areas during these times.

If you ever have questions, please consult your family medicine physician or primary care physician.