

PREVENTION OF SKIN DAMAGE

Once viewed as healthy and fashionable, **tanning** and **sun exposure** are dangerous propositions. Skin cancers are linked to sun overexposure. The incidence of melanoma has increased 4.6% per year in the last decade. For women 25 to 29 years of age, malignant melanoma is the most common cause of cancer. With a decreased ozone layer, even more ultraviolet (UV) rays reach the earth and you, increasing the danger. Sun exposure also causes skin premature skin aging. UV rays in tanning beds or booths are just as dangerous as those from the sun.

HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOURSELF

- Use sunscreen with a SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 15 or greater. A SPF of 15 allows a sun exposure 15 times longer than without protection before your skin turns red.
- Sunscreen comes in PABA and non-PABA varieties. Use non-PABA sunscreen on your face. It will not irritate your eyes, as PABA sunscreen will.
- Wear sunscreen on both sunny and cloudy days. UV rays from the sun penetrate clouds.
- Apply sunscreens liberally especially when at high altitudes where the sun intensity is increased and when near snow or water which reflect the light.
- Use waterproof sunscreens when in the water or sweating heavily. Re-apply waterproof sunscreen at least every 80 minutes and water resistant sunscreen every 60 minutes.
- Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin including your head if bald or thinning, to the tops of your ears, and the back of your neck.
- Wear a lip balm with a SPF of 15 or greater.
- Do not expose babies and children to sun especially if 1 year old or younger. Children over 6 mos. of age should also wear sunscreen when outside. Consult your family physician or pediatrician for advice regarding safe sunscreens for children under 6 mos. of age.
- Apply sunscreen 20 minutes BEFORE going outside for maximum protection.
- Give yourself additional protection with wide brim hats or clothing made of medium weave fabric.
- Avoid the sun when it is most intense, especially between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm.
- Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses that filter UV rays.
- Some medications, such as antibiotics, increase your sun sensitivity. Check with your physician about medications.
- Tanning pills are NOT recommended. Little is known about their effects, and they are not approved by the FDA.
- Since tanning beds and booths are not regulated, their transmission of UV rays are undetermined. Tanning beds and booths are just as dangerous as the sun for UV ray exposure.