

# Suncare Tips for Infant and Young Children

Tips for infants under 6 months of age:

**It is best to avoid periods of direct sunlight.**

**If you cannot avoid direct sunlight, it is optimal to use a physical barrier to block the sun** – such as clothing to cover exposed skin, wearing a broad brimmed hat, use the shade on the stroller, or go to a shaded outdoor area, like under a tent or trees. Tight-weaved clothing is preferred because it blocks more of the sun's rays. Hold the clothes up to the light to see how much light shines through – the less the better.

**If you cannot utilize physical barriers to block the sun, use a sunscreen product if the infant/child will be out in the sun for longer than a few minutes.** Apply the sunscreen correctly to optimize the safety and effectiveness of the product:

- Apply the product 15-20 minutes before sun exposure.
- Apply sunscreen carefully on young infants, on small areas of the body, such as the face and the backs of the hands, and avoid applying to the inside of the hands. Be careful around the eyes.
- Products should be applied liberally and reapplied at least every 2 hours; more often during water activities, sports, or heavy sweating. This is important not only for sunburn protection, but also for limiting free radical production which can add to skin cancer risk (<http://breakingnews.ewg.org/2011/sunscreen/sunscreens-exposed/does-sunscreen-damage-skin/>).
- Use a product that provides a minimal SPF of 15 and also provides broad spectrum protection. Look for a high star rating. Consider safer non-toxic products, such as those that are mineral based, avoiding products that contain vitamin A and oxybenzone. Also avoid powder or spray formulations. Refer to the EWG's Skin Deep Sunscreen (<http://breakingnews.ewg.org/2011/sunscreen/>) data base to see how particular products rate.

For older infants or young children:

- Limit time in the sun, especially between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- Don't forget the sunglasses – UV radiation can cause cataracts. Look for child-sized sunglasses with 99% UV protection.

April 2012/ References:

EWG's Skin Deep Cosmetics Database. Viewed 4/12. (<http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>)

The American Academy of Pediatrics. Safety & Protection. Sun Safety. Viewed 4/12

(<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Sun-Safety.aspx>)

