

Written by Marcus Tso

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As we are geared up to hit the beach and pools this season, let's not forget about the sun. As the spring equinox is in full effect, we can look forward to getting outside and enjoying the 12 hours of sunshine. spoke with Banner Health dermatologist Dr. Kirsten Flynn as she shares valuable information on taking care of our skin while under the sun.

"Sun Protective Factor (SPF) is best when you are using a broad spectrum of 30 or higher," says Flynn. "UVA and UVB can both contribute to skin cancer if you are not wearing any sun protectants." SPF 15 is useful if used properly.

When you are at the beach, use a higher level and more amount of sunscreen than you normally would. The thicker the sunscreen, the better it will stay on. If you are uncertain on how often you should apply sunscreen, information from studies say that 20 percent to 25 percent of the recommended use is not enough when you are only using one ounce to cover the entire body. Flynn says, "While you are catching the waves or at the pool, you should be reapplying your sun protectant every two hours. Be sure to use a water-resistant sunscreen. When you are doing physical activities under the sun, be sure to reapply every 80 minutes."

"Always seek shade every 20 to 30 minutes so that the sun is not burning your skin. The hours that you should avoid the sun are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m." She also recommends to not lay out or stay out too long. With sunscreen sprays, you can miss spots. Just be sure to go over the areas that are exposed to the sun twice. And don't be misled by clouds. The overcast can give a false sense of security so don't underestimate the cloudy days. Apply as you normally would on a sunny day.



Dr. Flynn's top three ingredients to look for when purchasing sunscreen:

- Avobenzone
- Zinc oxide.
- Titanium oxide.

They are physical blockers and chemical blockers of UV radiation. Though there has been controversy behind products that contain oxybenzone., there is not much evidence from studies to support certain claims. "When you are looking for SPF products, be sure to look for a powerful broad spectrum UVA-UVB protection. Try using the Neutrogena sun care products with Helioplex Technology. You can even use Anthelios SX with Mexoryl," says Flynn. If you are looking for environmentally friendly SPF products, it is safe to use products that contain zinc oxide and titanium. You can even try Neutrogena's Pure & Free Baby sunscreen.

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Sun protection is vital to remember even when fully dressed. “We should be applying sunscreen is any area that is exposed,” says Flynn. “If you are wearing a hat, don’t forget to apply sunscreen to your ears. We can avoid the damaging rays through clothing.” Some of the best types of sunglasses to wear to the beach are those that block the UVA/UVB reflections. Some people simply don’t wear enough to protect themselves. If you are planning to wear white, wear something with a thicker weave that will reflect the sun better.



Dr. Flynn suggests one of the best places to get sun-protective clothing is at [Sun Precautions](#). Their Solumbra collection is a patented fabric that is 100-plus SPF. This engineering provides long-lasting UV protection. On the Web site you can order a wide array of products from hats, cover-ups, to swimwear and pull overs. Try the Solumbra’s Headkini Cover-Up or Balaclava for the ultimate protection of the face against the harmful rays. You are sure to find something for everyone as they have men, women and children’s wear.



The sun can bring so much fun. Be sure to take the health of your skin into account. The American Academy of Dermatology has a plethora of useful information and more sunscreen facts. To learn more, visit [here](#).