

Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA)



Fact Sheet on Being SunSmart with Infants, Toddlers and Children

Introduction

Just one blistering sunburn in childhood or adolescence more than doubles a person's chances of developing melanoma later in life. The sun exposure pattern believed to result in melanoma is that of brief, intense exposure - a blistering sunburn - rather than years of tanning.

Parents should do their best to prevent their children from getting sunburned at any age. Parents and guardians need to be extra vigilant about sun protection for their infants and toddlers at all times.

[Picture Credit: Sunburn]



Sun Exposure Protection for Infants 0 to 6 Months

Infants under 6 months of age should be kept out of the sun. Special care should be taken from 10:00 until 15:00 when the Ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels of the sun are at their most intense.

If your baby is younger than 6 months, make sure to keep him/her out of direct sunlight. Protect the baby from sun exposure, whether direct or reflected ultraviolet (UV) radiation. UV radiation tends to reflect off certain surfaces, e.g. water, cement, tiles, sand or similar surfaces.

Children should always be dressed in appropriate protective clothing (preferably made from material with a UP indication of ultraviolet protection ability), a hat with a brim and sunglasses. Parents should also ensure that they do not get overheated.

Avoid the application of sunscreen on infants under the age of 6 months. Sunscreens are designed for use by children and adults. The skin of Babies and infants are less mature and also have a higher surface-area to body-weight ratio. This means that an infant's exposure to the chemicals in sunscreens may be much greater, increasing the risk of side effects from the application of sunscreen.

Here are some things to keep in mind every summer when outside with infants:

- Keep the infant in the shade
- Consult a paediatrician (preferably a dermatologist) before using any sunscreen on infants. If used at all, one should not assume that the infant is well protected
- Provide the child with a hat made of sufficiently thick material of good ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) quality. The hat should provide sufficient shade at all times and provide protection for the whole face, ears and neck.
- The same applies to clothing which should cover and protect the sensitive skin of infants.



[Picture Credit: Well Protected Infant]

- With the slightest indication that an infant is becoming sunburned, remove the infant from the sun immediately and apply cold compresses to the affected areas. Seek medical assistance if necessary or in doubt.

Sun Exposure Protection for Babies 6 to 12 Months

Use liberal amounts of sunscreen on babies and infants of 6 months or older. This should be applied approximately 20 minutes before taking them into direct sunlight. Limit sun exposure especially between 10:00 to 15:00



[Picture Credit: Children in the Sun]

- Always choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 – preferably SPF 30
 - Sunscreen should be generously applied - and reapplied at least every two hours - more often if the baby is spending time in the water
 - Always first test the sunscreen on a small area of the baby or toddler's skin to check for any skin reactions
- Babies and children with naturally darker skin tones should also have their face and eyes protected from over exposure to UV rays

Sun Exposure Protection for Toddlers and Pre-School Kids

Aim to minimise direct sun exposure time between 10:00 and 15:00.

[Picture Credit: Boy with Hat]

Make use of a combination of sun protection measures:

- Clothe children with cool, loose fitting clothes and wraps made from densely woven fabrics with a good ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating. If possible, choose fabrics that are at least UPF15 (good protection), but preferably



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UPF50 (excellent protection).

- Always use a broad spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15 but preferably a SPF 30. Pay special attention to the bridge of the nose, the back of the neck as well as earlobes.



- Provide children with broad-brimmed hats. Try to obtain a bucket or legionnaire style hat because it will adequately protect the child's face, neck and ears.

[Picture Credit: Sunglasses]

- Provide children with sunglasses. Look for sunglasses that are labelled at least UV400 and are close fitting and of wrap-around style

Sun Exposure Protection for School Kids and Adolescents

Every child should have access to proper sun protection at school.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) excess solar UV radiation exposure during school years contributes significantly to total lifetime sun exposure.

In South Africa, sunlight is most intense between 10:00 and 15:00, when learners are often outdoors for recess and other school or after-school activities. It is during these times that children need to be protected against UV radiation.

- Proper sun protection in childhood can drastically reduce the risk of developing skin cancer as an adult.
- Regardless of age and skin colour, every child should be taught about sun protection
- Children should be taught to seek shade whenever possible. If possible, children should be taught to seek shade under a tree or an UPF umbrella
- When possible, long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts can provide protection from UV rays.
- Give the child a hat that will provide shade for the face, scalp, ears, and neck.
- Provide children with good quality UVB400 sunglasses.
- Let children apply sunscreen of 15 – 30 SPF. Do not forget to pay special attention to protect ears, nose, lips, and the tops of feet.



Incidence of Skin Cancer in Infants, Toddlers and Children

According to the National Cancer Registry (2014) the following cases of skin cancer were diagnosed in infants, toddlers and children:

Type of Skin Cancer: 2014	All Boys 0 to 4 Years	All Boys 5 to 9 Years	All Boys 10 to 14 Years	All Boys 15 to 19 Years
Basal Cell Carcinoma	1	2	1	1
Squamous Cell Carcinoma	3	1	2	2
Malignant Melanoma	1	1	1	7

Type of Skin Cancer: 2014	All Girls 0 to 4 Years	All Girls 5 to 9 Years	All Girls 10 to 14 Years	All Girls 15 to 19 Years
Basal Cell Carcinoma	0	1	3	3
Squamous Cell Carcinoma	1	0	3	1
Malignant Melanoma	0	0	4	6

Medical Disclaimer

This Fact Sheet is intended to provide general information only and, as such, should not be considered as a substitute for advice, medically or otherwise, covering any specific situation. Users should seek appropriate advice before taking or refraining from taking any action in reliance on any information contained in this Fact Sheet. So far as permissible by law, the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) does not accept any liability to any person (or his/her dependants/estate/heirs) relating to the use of any information contained in this Fact Sheet.

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Sources and References Consulted or Utilised

Boy with Hat

https://www.google.co.za/search?q=infant+with+broad+brimmed+hat&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=s-OzU9SnlqmQ7AbO3YGgAw&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAQ&biw=1517&bih=714&dpr=0.9#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgrc=KyjLCcdSMUoXOM%253A%3BKqcUoEggoiTVAM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.sungrubbies.com%252FWeb%252520images%252FAdventure-Hat-Kid-cp.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.sungrubbies.com%252Fproduct_departments_html%252FSun-Hats-Dept.htm%3B142%3B147

Cancer Council Australia

[http://wiki.cancer.org.au/prevention/Position_statement_-_Sun_protection_and_infants_\(0-12_months\)](http://wiki.cancer.org.au/prevention/Position_statement_-_Sun_protection_and_infants_(0-12_months))

Centers for Disease Control and Protection

http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/children.htm

Children in the Sun

https://www.google.co.za/search?q=sun+protection+6+to+12+months&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=3-WzU5bXAcqV7AbwqoGABQ&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAQ&biw=1517&bih=714&dpr=0.9#facrc=_&imgdii=KuCQjhb-DzKioM%3A%3B3C51VW7y2CQerM%3BKuCQjhb-DzKioM%3A&imgrc=KuCQjhb-DzKioM%253A%3B5rP-QFD0CzpCPM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252F4.bp.blogspot.com%252F-uG5G5zy346I%252Fub-uDMhGY-l%252FAAAAAAACrY%252Fjqv1INMQehE%252Fs1600%252Fmayfavs4.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fhouseofburke.blogspot.com%252F2013%252F06%252Fmay-mommy-and-baby-favorites.html%3B1206%3B1600

Harvard Medical School

<http://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/two-keys-to-strong-bones-calcium-and-vitamin-d>

Kids Health

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sun-safety.html>

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Mayo Clinic

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NHS

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/852.aspx?CategoryID=87>

NIH Medline Plus

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/winter11/articles/winter11pg12.html>

Skin Cancer Foundation

<http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sun-protection/children/sun-safety-tips-for-infants-babies-and-toddlers>
<http://www.skincancer.org/get-involved/schools/protection-form>

Sunburn

https://www.google.co.za/search?q=sunburn+infants+and+toddlers&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=obqyU5idJevb7AbEoYcGg&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAQ&biw=1517&bih=714&dpr=0.9#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgrc=jsyVbqZHJ8abIM%253A%3BK0sTzWtyaz7MM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fhomeremedieshealth.com%252Fwp-content%252Fuploads%252Fsunburn_kid.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.totz2teens.co.uk%252Farticles%252Fsunse.htm%3B500%3B300

Sunglasses

https://www.google.co.za/search?q=wrap+around+sunglasses+children&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=yu6zU7eDNOqv7AbC64HgDQ&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAQ&biw=1517&bih=666&dpr=0.9#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgrc=GS63EKVrzYjH3M%253A%3BRpfAigZCf0_-EM%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fblog.realkidshades.com%252Ffiles%252F2011%252F12%252Fmfs_desc_pic1.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fblog.realkidshades.com%252Funcategorized%252Fhurray-it-is-vacation-week%252F%3B330%3B245

SunSmart

<http://www.sunsmart.com.au/communities/parents>

US Food and Drug Administration

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<http://www.fda.gov/radiation-EmittingProducts/RadiationEmittingProductsandProcedures/tanning/ucm116434.htm>

Well Protected Infant

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World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs287/en/>

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