

CANADIAN DERMATOLOGY ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT SUN PROTECTION AND SUNSCREEN USE

Sunscreen is a safe and effective form of sun protection, when used as part of a comprehensive sun protective strategy which includes the use of hats, sunglasses, sun-protective clothing and seeking shade.

As one component of a daily sun-protection strategy, sunscreen helps prevent sunburn, and decreases the risk of skin cancer. Strong evidence supports the benefits of applying sunscreen to minimize short-and long-term damage to the skin from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

Claims that sunscreen ingredients are hazardous have not been supported by scientific evidence.

Sunscreen products contain one or more active ingredients — compounds that absorb, scatter or reflect ultraviolet (UV) radiation — and are regulated as over-the-counter drugs by Health Canada.

To reduce the risk of skin cancer and premature aging, dermatologists continue to recommend generously applying a water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen – one that protects against both types of ultraviolet radiation (UVA and UVB) – with an SPF 30 or higher. UVA in a circle on the label denotes good UVA protection.

Use a generous amount of sunscreen to ensure the most effective protection. The average adult requires approximately two to three tablespoons of sunscreen to cover the whole body, and a teaspoon to cover the face and neck. Sunscreen should be reapplied after swimming, strenuous exercise, sweating or towelling off.

Health Canada has several regulations in place that govern the manufacture and marketing of all sunscreen products, including safety data on their ingredients. There are a wide range of sunscreen products on the market today. For a list of those that have been found to be sun-stable and reliably protect against both UVA and UVB, see the list of the [Canadian Dermatology Association's recognized products](#). Then choose the form (i.e. cream, lotion, spray, or balm) that you are most likely to use.

We encourage anyone with questions about sun protection and sunscreens to talk to a Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (FRCPC) certified dermatologist, who can use their expertise to help develop an effective sun protection plan.

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