



Kapa'a Pediatrics, LLC

## Sunscreen

Children's skin is very susceptible to damage from the sun. Getting just a few bad sunburns in childhood can increase a person's chances of getting life-threatening forms of skin cancer. The best protection from the sun is having your child wear a hat and protective clothing. After that, protect kids with a broad spectrum sunscreen that protects against **BOTH** UVA (Type 1 and 2) and UVB rays. UVA rays cause photoaging; UVB rays cause sunburn and skin cancer. SPF of 15 blocks 93% of UVB, while SPF of 30 blocks 97%, and SPF of 50 blocks 98%.

Sunscreens are always changing and it is difficult for us to provide a list of recommended sunscreens. The following tips can help you make an educated decision when selecting a sunscreen.

### Infants

Infants under 6 months should be kept out of direct sun as much as possible during peak radiation hours. Their skin is not yet protected by melanin. In general sunscreen should be avoided if possible.

- Cover them up with tightly woven, but loose-fitting clothing and a sun hat.
- Provide shade for them, but remember shade does not prevent against reflective UV rays.
- Avoid prolonged direct exposure during peak hours 9am-4pm.
- Most products warn against using sunscreen on infants less than 6 months.
- Sunscreen can be used on infants as a last resort when shade cannot be found.

### Toddlers and Children

Similarly to infants, try to avoid prolonged exposure during peak radiation hours. Otherwise sunscreen is essential when spending a lot of exposed time in the sun.

- Test for allergy to sunscreen by applying a small amount to your child's wrist the day before.
- Don't be stingy! Slop the sunscreen on and reapply often, especially when your child is playing in the water or sweating. About 4 TABLESPOONS (or a shot glass full) needs to be used to gain the SPF protection listed on the bottle. Reapplication every 2 hours is recommended.
- Apply before school especially if there is no shade on the playground or if outdoor activities are scheduled.

### Sunscreen DONT'S and the reasons why:

- NO SPRAY SUNSCREEN - inhalation health risk, may miss spots, flammable when on skin
- No High SPF's (over 50)- any SPF over 50 doesn't add any further benefit
- No Oxybenzone - gets into bloodstream and studies show health risks
- Avoid avobenzone, octisalate, octocrylene, homosalate, octinoxate, due to possible health risk
- No Vitamin A (Retinyl Palmitate, Retinol)- may speed development of skin tumors and lesions
- No Combined Sunscreen/Bug Repellants- too many chemicals, may be harmful

\*\*\* Patient handouts created by Kapa'a Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concern that your child was given an incorrect diagnosis or is not following the usual expected course for an illness please call us to speak with a physician. (808) 634-8011 \*\*\*