

## Sunburn

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### DEFINITION

Sunburn is due to overexposure of the skin to ultraviolet rays of the sun or a sun lamp. The symptoms of sunburn do not begin until two to four hours after the sun's damage has been done. The peak reaction of pain, redness and swelling is usually not seen for 24 hours. Prolonged sun exposure can cause blistering, a second-degree burn. Sunburn never causes a third-degree burn or scarring.

### PAIN RELIEF

- Adults may use aspirin or ibuprofen products early and continue taking them regularly for up to two days to reduce the pain and discomfort
- For children, avoid aspirin and contact your child's physician for instructions
- Apply nonprescription hydrocortisone cream three times each day to reduce swelling and pain
- Apply aloe or moisturizing cream to reduce peeling
- Use cool baths or wet compresses several times a day
- Drink extra water to replace the fluid lost because of swelling and sunburned skin
- Avoid petrolatum or other ointments, because they keep heat and sweat from escaping
- Do not apply butter to the sunburn
- Do not use first aid creams or sprays for burns, they may cause an allergic rash.

### PREVENTION

- Apply sunscreen anytime you or your child is going to be outside more than 30 minutes
- Wear protective clothing, such as loose fitting clothes with long sleeves
- Try to keep sun exposure to small amounts
- Keep infants out of the sun. Their skin is thinner and more sensitive to the sun
- Sunscreens, longer clothing and a hat with a brim are essential for children
- Note that some medications may increase sensitivity to the sun: antibiotics and oral contraceptives
- Avoid tanning beds, because they are just as dangerous as the sun
- Do not let overcast days give you a false sense of security
- Avoid continuous sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### SUNSCREENS

- Everyone should use an SPF of 15 or higher
- Use a sunscreen that does not contain PABA
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming, after towel drying or after 30 minutes in water
- Give special attention to high exposure areas: nose, ears, cheeks and shoulders
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before exposure to the sun
- Do not confuse sunscreens that block the sun's burning rays with suntan lotions or oils that mainly lubricate the skin.

### CONSIDER NOTIFYING YOUR PHYSICIAN IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

- The sunburn becomes infected
- You or your child begins feeling very sick

- You or your child develops a fever over 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit.