

# Sunscreens

## - the facts



### What is sunscreen?

Sunscreen provides a screen or filter from the sun's rays. Sunscreen does not provide 100 per cent protection from ultraviolet radiation (UVR).

### Why should we use sunscreen?

Sunscreen helps to protect our skin from UVR, thereby minimising our risk of developing skin cancer and premature ageing. Sunscreen protects our skin from skin damage, like sunglasses protect our eyes from eye damage.

### What does SPF mean?

SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. It is a measure of the level of protection against sunburn that a sunscreen provides. The higher the SPF, the better the protection from UVR. The maximum SPF of sunscreens sold in Australia is 30+.

### Which sunscreen should I use?

Firstly, you should ensure your sunscreen will protect you from both UVA and UVB radiation. This means using a broad-spectrum sunscreen. It should be SPF30+ and water-resistant. Using SPF30+ sunscreen means you are protected from about 96.7 per cent of UVR.

### Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

The generosity of Queenslanders makes this program possible. Visit [www.qldcancer.com.au](http://www.qldcancer.com.au)

We are an independent, community-based charity and are not government funded

For information and support contact our Helpline on 13 11 20, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm



## How do I apply sunscreen?

Sunscreen needs to be applied to clean, dry skin at least 20 minutes before going outside. Apply sunscreen liberally every two hours, or more frequently if you are sweating, swimming or it has been wiped off. To apply liberally means about a teaspoon per limb. It is also important to keep a thin film of sunscreen on your skin to maximise its effectiveness, so resist the temptation to rub it all in.

## What else can I do to protect myself from UVR?

Just remember the use of sunscreen should be your last line of defence from UVR. Firstly, try to minimise your time in the sun between 10am and 3pm. If you do need to be out in the sun, wear dark-coloured, close-weave clothing to stop UVR from penetrating the fabric. Wear a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style hat, and don't forget to protect your eyes with wrap around sunglasses that conform to the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067:2003. Try to stay in the shade as much as possible.

## FAQs

### I get a terrible rash all over my skin when I use sunscreen. What should I do to protect my skin?

Your skin may be reacting to some of the chemicals in the sunscreen. Try another sunscreen, or even one for sensitive skin, as sunscreens (sometimes even in the same brand line) differ in the ingredients they use. Also, don't forget to use other methods of protecting your skin as well as sunscreen, such as a long-sleeved shirt and other clothing.

### If I use sunscreen, can I stay out in the sun longer?

Sunscreen should never be used to deliberately increase the amount of time you spend in the sun. Damage from exposure to UVR is cumulative, meaning the more you are out in the sun, the more likely you are to develop skin cancer or other skin damage. In all instances, you should try to limit your exposure to UVR by minimising your time in the sun.



**For further information call**



**The Cancer Council  
Helpline  
13 11 20**

**Monday to Friday  
8am to 8pm (toll free)  
or visit our website  
[www.qldcancer.com.au](http://www.qldcancer.com.au)**

### **Acknowledgement**

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