



Sunscreen Myths - Busted!

Posted by [Leslie Baumann, M.D.](#) on Thu, May 31, 2007, 2:09 pm PDT

By now, most people realize that sun exposure is damaging and protect themselves with some regularity - which is wonderful. But time and time again, I see well-meaning people diminish their efforts by making these common mistakes about sun protection:

Myth No. 1

I don't need sunscreen. I'm spending the day inside. Are you sure? Remember that UVA rays can easily penetrate windows of cars, buildings, even airplanes.

Once you total the time you spend in the car or near a window in the office - plus those quick trips outside - you might be very surprised at how much sun exposure you're getting. Daily SPF of at least 15 is a must (and you can get it in many moisturizers and makeup products to keep your morning routine simple!).

Myth No. 2

It's best to put sunscreen on the second I get to the beach to maximize its effectiveness.

Remember that it takes 30 minutes for sunscreen to adequately penetrate your skin. Put it on at home instead.

Myth No. 3

Between my SPF 15 moisturizer, SPF 15 foundation, and SPF 15 powder, I'm up to a total SPF of 45. If only it worked that way.

When you use three SPF 15 products, you actually end up with an SPF of ... 15. No adding. If you used products with different SPFs, though, you will end up with the highest protection of the bunch.

Myth No. 4

I put sunscreen on my arms and legs, but the rest of my body is covered by clothes. Careful - the average cotton T-shirt actually has an SPF of about 5, far short of your SPF 15 minimum.

If you plan to spend a lot of time in the great outdoors (golfing, beaching, gardening, etc.), be sure to cover your entire body with sunscreen before getting dressed. You can also purchase special sun-protective clothing through a variety of Web sites.

Wishing you great skin!