

Sunscreens

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For questions or an appointment, call (806)797-1202

Sunscreens are topical agents that protect the skin from Ultraviolet light. They are not to be used to justify more time in the sun – that negates their purpose.

The effectiveness of sunscreen is expressed as the SPF (Sun Protection Factor). **Any sunscreen that claims to have an SPF of greater than 30 is no better than one that is around SPF 30.** This is just a marketing tool to get you to buy their product. An SPF of 15 gives 93% protection and an SPF of 34 gives 97% protection (so you get diminishing returns with greater SPF).

Use sunscreen with an **SPF 15 for daily use** (when you don't plan to be out for prolonged periods of time. I like Oil of Olay with SPF 15 since it is a light, less greasy, and contains Titanium Dioxide.)

Use an **SPF of 30+ if you are going to be out in the sun for long periods** of time (greater than 25 minutes) Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors. Reapply every 2 hours after exposure to water.

Glass filters out UVB light but allows exposure to UVA -- so you can get sun damage from sitting next to windows at home or riding in your car.

I prefer that you use a sunscreen with either **Zinc Oxide or Titanium Dioxide** since these are physical blockers that reflect the sun and protect you from the greatest range of wavelengths of UV light. Be mindful that they also tend to be thicker, less transparent and leave a subtle white coating on your skin.

Even if you are using a sunscreen without Zinc or Titanium – you are still getting more benefit than if you did not use sunscreen at all.

Be sure to apply sunscreen to the bottom of your lip. Look for SPF 15 or greater.

There are many good brands out there.

Baby Magic (it's in a pink bottle) by Banana Boat, Neutrogena, Coppertone Sport, Elta Block, Blue Lizard. Oil of Olay makes a good one for every day use with an SPF of 15.

Since our body produces vitamin D with sunlight – concerns have been raised about sunscreens causing low vitamin D in our bodies. Since Vitamin D can be obtained through vitamin supplements – this should not even be an issue. **I recommend the following:**

- Regular use of Sunscreen (preferably with Zinc Oxide).**
- Wear Protective clothing (especially clothes designed to protect from UV radiation)**
- Vitamin D levels may need to be monitored (preferably by PCP during routine care).**
- Vitamin D3 supplementation 1000-5000 IU daily**