

How to stay sun-safe this summer

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Clear skies, warm days and free time set the stage for more people being active during the approaching summer months. A dermatologist at Baylor College of Medicine reminds outdoor enthusiasts about the importance of protecting your skin against the sun and offers tips for a few key outdoor activities.

"Sunburn can be painful and ruin your day, but more importantly you're trying to prevent [skin cancer](#)," said Dr. John Wolf, professor of dermatology at Baylor. "Sunlight exposure has been proven as one of the major causes of skin cancer."

The principles of sun safety

If you are spending any time in the sun this summer, sunscreen is a necessity. Your daily sunscreen should have a [sun protection factor](#) (SPF) of at least 30 (50 for days where you will be doing more intense outdoor activity), and should offer broad spectrum protection, protection against UVA and UVB rays.

Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before exposure to the sun to allow it to bind to the outer layer of the skin. Wolf recommends sunscreen that contains [zinc oxide](#) or titanium dioxide as the protecting ingredient as they typically contain fewer other ingredients. For best practice, reapply every two hours; however, Wolf says reapplying periodically is better than not reapplying at all.

Wolf also encourages the use of UV [protective clothing](#). This includes caps, wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts and pants. Finally, Wolf encourages outdoor activity to be done during the morning and evening hours, when there is less direct sunlight.

Tennis and pickleball sun safety

Play your matches during the morning or afternoon. Try to find courts that are shaded or are close to shaded rest areas. Sunscreen application is important; those who excessively sweat can wear hats to prevent sunscreen from running into their eyes.

"A good rule of thumb is to reapply sunscreen when taking a break between sets. Enough time will have probably passed since your last application," Wolf said.

Sun safety is a hole-in-one

Because [golf courses](#) are often unshaded, sunscreen is especially important when playing. High temperatures may deter golfers from wearing long-sleeved UV protecting shirts and pants, however; they are some of the best ways to protect the skin. If you have thinning hair, a hat will also protect the skin on the top of your head. Wolf advises golfers to reapply when they get to the back nine of their course.

Fun in the sun, on the water

Those who enjoy [recreational activities](#) around or in bodies of water, such as swimming, boating or fishing, should ensure their sunscreen is waterproof. Harmful rays can reflect off [open water](#), so boaters and fishers should put extra effort into reapplying sunscreen and wearing protective clothing. Recreational swimmers should consider wearing UV protective clothing when the sun is at its highest.

Some people may lounge around water to rid themselves of tan lines; however, Wolf discourages excessive time spent in the sun. Alternatively, Wolf encourages using preventative measures to avoid getting tan lines and allowing them to naturally fade to avoid skin damage.

"I always say the best anti-aging cream is [sunscreen](#). I keep mine next to my toothpaste so that I can put it on in the morning, and I have a small travel-sized container in case I'm out for a prolonged time," Wolf said.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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