



the FLAME®

Healthcare News and Tips

June 21, 2022

Today marks the 'official' start of summer! Most U.S. schools are dismissed, movie theatres enjoy larger audiences, families head out on vacations to the beaches, lakes, campgrounds, mountains, and cities and baseball games are in play again.

At or centered on the summer solstice, the earliest sunrise and latest sunset occurs, daylight hours are longest and dark hours are shortest, with day length decreasing as the season progresses after the solstice. In other words, there is plenty of time to be outside and active!

And being outside means you should be mindful of the sun!



A Spoonful of Medicine; A Shot of Sunscreen

Who needs sunscreen?

Easy answer. Everyone. People of ALL skin colors get skin cancer. More than 5.4 million non-melanoma skin cancers in more than 3 million people are diagnosed every year. Many of these skin cancers could have been prevented with protection. So forget using the "I don't get sunburn" excuse-wear sunscreen.

How much should I use?

This June issue of *The Flame* offers help about protecting your skin from sun damage.



Happy Summer!!

Betty

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Listen to Aja Tell Her Story.

A surgical error nicked Aja King's vocal cords. Charlotte Jaroma, RN, BSN, became Aja's voice while she was in the hospital, then helped her to get her own voice back.

Aja, a social worker with the City of Philadelphia, had access to Guardian Nurses as a benefit of her membership in AFSCME District Council 47.

Dermatologists suggest that a shot glass of sunscreen is enough to apply to MOST people. Obviously if you have more skin to cover, you may need another shot! Cheers!!

When should I use sunscreen?

- If you are outside, EVERY DAY. The sun never stops emitting harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays all year long.
- Even on cloudy days, up to 80% of the sun's harmful UV rays can penetrate your skin.
- And heads up pool and beach goers: Sand and water increase the need for sunscreen because they reflect the sun's rays.

Is a high-number SPF better than a low-number one?

Dermatologists recommend using a sunscreen with an SPF of **at least** 30, which blocks 97% of the sun's UVB rays. Higher-number SPFs block slightly more of the sun's UVB rays, but no sunscreen can block 100% of the sun's UVB rays.

Can I use the sunscreen I bought last summer, or do I need to purchase a new bottle each year? Does it lose its strength?

The FDA requires that all sunscreens retain their original strength for at least three years.

- Some sunscreens include an expiration date. If the expiration date has passed, throw it out.
- If you buy a sunscreen that does not have an expiration date, write the date you bought it on the bottle. That way you'll know when to throw it out.
- You also can look for visible signs that the sunscreen may no longer be good. Any obvious changes in the color or consistency of the product mean it's time to purchase a new bottle.

How and when do I treat a sunburn?

As soon as possible. In addition to stopping further UV exposure, dermatologists recommend treating a sunburn with:

- Cool baths to reduce the heat.
- Moisturizer to help ease the discomfort caused by dryness. As soon as you get out of the bathtub, gently pat yourself dry, but leave a little water on your skin. Then apply a moisturizer to trap the water in your skin.



Happy Pride Month!

Colorful uplifting parades with floats and celebrities, joyous festivals, workshops, picnics, and parties are among the principal components of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Pride Month, also called **Gay Pride, which is celebrated in June** in the U.S. and elsewhere around the world.

- Hydrocortisone cream that you can buy without a prescription to help ease discomfort.
- Aspirin or ibuprofen. This can help reduce the swelling, redness, and discomfort.
- Drinking extra water. A sunburn draws fluid to the skin surface and away from the rest of the body. Drinking extra water prevents dehydration.
- Do not treat with "-caine" products (such as benzocaine).

If your skin blisters, you have a second-degree sunburn. Dermatologists recommend that you:

- Allow the blisters to heal untouched. Blisters form to help your skin heal and protect you from infection.
- If the blisters cover a large area, such as your entire back, or you have chills, a headache, or a fever, please seek immediate medical care.

With any sunburn, you should avoid the sun while your skin heals. Be sure to cover the sunburn every time before you head outdoors.

- For more information on sunscreen and general skin care, visit the **American Academy of Dermatology website** or the **Skin Cancer Facts & Statistics** website for some sobering numbers.

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