

NASCO SAFETY BULLETIN



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A recent article by Dermatologist Martin Weinstock, MD, PhD, the chairman of the Skin Cancer Advisory Group of the American Cancer Society (ACS), summarized the best way to protect your skin from sun damage. Here are the highlights:

- The ACS recommends using the "Slip! Slop! Slap! Wrap!" approach to protecting your skin from the sun: slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, and wrap around sunglasses to protect your eyes and skin from ultraviolet (UV) exposure
- Apply sunscreen about 20 minutes before heading outdoors and reapply about 20 minutes after being in the sun in order to make sure all your skin is protected. Reapply sunscreen every two hours and immediately after swimming or sweating heavily. Sunscreen usually wipes off when you towel off.
- Waterproof sunscreens are tested to last for up to 80 minutes and should be reapplied at regular intervals if you're in the water for prolonged periods of time. Sunscreens labeled as "water resistant" should be reapplied every 40 minutes.
- Don't forget to apply sunscreen to the ears, back of the neck, cheekbones, nose, lips and exposed areas of the scalp in addition to shoulders, backs of the legs and tops of the feet. Sunscreen sprays and sticks can be helpful in reaching these often forgotten areas. Both men and women are most likely to get sun-related skin cancers on their nose because it gets the most sun exposure, which makes it a prime target for sunscreen.
- A palm full of sunscreen should be used to cover the arms, legs, neck, and face of the average adult. When the sunscreen is applied too thinly, the sun protection can be as little as half of the SPF factor listed on the bottle
- Weinstock recommends using an SPF of at least 30; a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 blocks out all but one-thirtieth of the sun's burning rays, which allows people to stay out in the sun 30 times longer than they normally would be able to without burning.
- The intensity of the sun's damaging UV rays peaks at midday. On a clear, sunny day, the UV index may rise to high (7,8,9) or very high (10+), and skin damage can begin in as little as 15 minutes