

Summer sun is great for outdoor activity and adventures, but it also comes with the ultraviolet rays that impact our skin. The Ontario Medical Association spoke with Dr. Sandra Landolt, chair of the OMA's section of dermatology, for tips on how to enjoy the sunshine while staying healthy and safe.

1. Understand sunscreen terminology

When buying sunscreen, look for one that has a "broad spectrum label", which means that it offers protection from all UV (ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B) rays. Sunscreens can be chemical blockers, physical blockers or a combination of both. Chemical blockers absorb UV rays, preventing them from getting into your skin. Physical blockers deflect the UV rays off your skin, like a shield.

2. Mix sunscreen with your routine

You should apply sunscreen underneath all other skincare products. The sun's visible light naturally increases skin pigmentation. To prevent that, you can either mix your sunscreen with makeup pigment to block the visible light or buy a tinted sunscreen. Wearing insect repellent and sunscreen at the same time will decrease the effectiveness of your sunscreen's protection.

3. Reapply sunscreen throughout the day

All sunscreens become less powerful as the day goes on: chemical blockers deteriorate as they absorb UV light and physical blockers can be washed or rubbed off. Reapplying sunscreen every 90 minutes will give your skin the best protection.

4. Wear sun protection clothing

Wear sun protective clothing to shade your skin from UV light. The darker and the thicker the material, the more protective it will be. You can also purchase sun protection clothing with an ultraviolet protective factor that indicates how much UV radiation a fabric allows to reach your skin. These clothes will have labels indicating their UPF. They will generally have protective abilities of around UPF 50.

5. Consider the shade

It's best to spend time outside when the sun is not at its highest point during the day, typically before 10 a.m. and after 2 p.m. During the sunniest part of the day, it's best to plan activities in the shade to avoid UV rays