



Safe Sun

By Wendy Marks
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The EWG, or Environmental Working Group is a private non-profit organization that rates many kinds of products for safety including sunscreen, make up, nail polish, hair dyes, shampoos, etc. Anyone can use their free website to get lots of great information. They are well known for their safe sunscreen guide. It is available on their website or, for lazy folks like me, Amazon has EWG approved sunscreens in a separate store on their site.

Here are some salient sunscreen points from EWG. First, a disclaimer; I myself am a swimmer and I get a tan every summer despite regular sunscreen use. We need sunshine to be healthy. It is the overuse, and the burning that is really bad for us. Many of us fried in the sun as youngsters, and that puts us at higher risk for skin cancer.

Since EWG launched its annual sunscreen guide and its efforts to get industry and the Food and Drug Administration to make, market and regulate safer, more effective products, there have been significant improvements on behalf of consumers – and a few areas where more still needs to be done.

SUNSCREEN REGULATION MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Since 2011...

SUNSCREEN LABELS MUST INCLUDE WARNINGS ABOUT SKIN CANCER AND AGING

SUNSCREEN LABELS CANNOT TOUT MISLEADING CLAIMS LIKE "WATERPROOF" OR "SUNBLOCK"

THE FDA ESTABLISHED NEW WATER RESISTANCE TESTING AND LABELING GUIDELINES

THERE ARE NEW BROAD-SPECTRUM TESTING STANDARDS

PRES. OBAMA SIGNED THE 2014 SUNSCREEN INNOVATION ACT, WHICH CREATED
A BETTER FDA PROCESS FOR REVIEWING AND APPROVING NEW INGREDIENTS

BUT WE HAVE MORE WORK TO DO

Don't panic, but please get checked every year all over your body. Take a look at this summary of their findings. The full report is available on their website: EWG.org.

As they work on lobbying the FDA, here are some things you can do simple things to protect yourself and your children.

1. Use sunscreen all the time, not just for long exposures.
2. Wear sun-blocking clothing, gauze shirts, sunglasses, visors or caps, and long pants.
3. Reapply sunscreen every hour - none of them really last as long as they say.
4. If you swim, reapply the sunscreen after you get out of the water.
5. Apply sunscreen about one half hour before exposure.
6. Sweat is wonderful, as it cools your body, but once again it requires reapplying.
7. Talk to your doctor, about taking Vitamin D, as it appears to reduce skin cancer risks.
8. Get a check by a dermatologist every year, and strip naked.
9. Don't burn. That sets off a whole set of body responses that may be linked to cancer.
10. Read about the various types of sunscreens, mineral-based, spray, etc., and learn the pros and cons of all of them. For example, I use a spray on my body and mineral on my face. That's sensible as water washes things off fast and the mineral, though ugly, sticks.
11. Don't forget those kissers. Lips are a commonly forgotten area. Ears too!
12. Don't use tanning beds. The statistics are terrible for skin cancer post usage.
13. Relax and enjoy fun and the sun.

Namaste,
Wendy