

Sunscreen

When used correctly sunscreen can protect against sunburn and sun damage. Sunscreen should be used to decrease exposure to UV radiation, not to increase the amount of time spent in the sun.



Applying sunscreen

The protective effect of sunscreen depends on correct application.

- Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before sun exposure to allow time for it to dry and be absorbed into the skin.
- For adults, a teaspoon per limb is a good rule of thumb. Add another teaspoon for your face, front and back. This comes to seven teaspoons (35ml) in all if you are at the beach in board shorts or a bikini.
- Always reapply sunscreen every two hours when you are outdoors and more often if you are sweating or in water.

What should I look for when buying sunscreen?

- Choose a broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30.
- Look for AS/NZ 2604 standard on the label.

What is the difference between SPF 30 and SPF 50?

- Both provide sufficient sun protection if applied correctly.
- When you follow the instructions on the label, SPF30 filters 96.7% of UV radiation. SPF50+ filters 98% of UV radiation.

Is sunscreen safe?

To date, there is no scientific evidence showing long-term side effects following regular use of sunscreen.

Sunscreen and babies

- Be cautious about using sunscreen on babies under one year of age. It is safer to keep babies in shade and protective clothing.
- If using sunscreen on a baby or toddler's skin test it on a small area of their skin first and leave for 24 hours to check for a reaction. Stop use immediately if there is a reaction.

Remember sunscreen is not a suit of armour. It should be used in combination with other SunSmart behaviours

Slip, slop, slap and wrap!
Remember to be SunSmart

SLIP
on a shirt with long sleeves and a collar

SLIP
into the shade of an umbrella or leafy tree

SLOP
on broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen of at least SPF 30

SLAP
on a hat with a wide brim

WRAP
on close fitting sunglasses that protect against UV radiation

Cancer Society
Te Kāhui Matepukupuku o Aotearoa