

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Tips for Choosing the Best Sunscreen and Being Sun Safe

Each year about two million Americans develop skin cancer. Ultraviolet Rays (UV) from the sun and other sources like tanning beds are the primary cause of skin cancer. Sunscreen manufacturers offer an array of protective products from sprays to wipes, but it can be confusing which one to choose to offer the best protection for you and your family.

When choosing a sunscreen, a Sun Protective Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher is best. The SPF is the level of protection the sunscreen provides against UVB rays-rays that are the main cause of sunburn. Higher SPF numbers mean more protection, but the higher you go, the smaller the difference becomes.

Choosing a sunscreen with “broad spectrum” protection will protect you from the UVA rays, which cause the skin to age, and the UVB rays.

“Even if the sunscreen you choose says water-resistant or waterproof, manufacturers are required to specify the length of time it will protect while swimming or sweating,” said Janelle Hansen, Health Educator with Panhandle Public Health District.

“For best results, reapply sunscreen at least every two hours and even more often if you are swimming or sweating. Sunscreen’s protective power is strongest when it’s fairly fresh on your skin,” she added.

Consider that waterproof doesn’t mean sand proof or towel proof. Give yourself a fresh coat any time your skin is subject to abrasive forces.

Sunscreen does have an expiration date. It should be on the bottle. If you cannot find a date and you purchased the product 12 months or more ago, toss it.

Other important ways to stay sun-safe include:

- **Cover up:** When you are out in the sun, wear clothing and a wide-brimmed hat to protect as much skin as possible. Protect your eyes with sunglasses that block at least 99% of UV light.

- Seek shade: Limit your direct exposure to the sun, especially between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm, when UV rays are strongest.
- Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps: Both can cause serious long-term skin damage and contribute to skin cancer.

For more information on sun safety, visit www.pphd.org or contact Hansen at 308-487-3600 Ext. 105. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.