

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 one 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.

To keep safe, follow these important tips:

- Wear sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15 whether in or out of the pool.
- Apply sunscreen to all areas exposed to the sun.
- Thirty minutes before going outdoors, apply a SPF 15 or greater broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB), water-resistant sunscreen so it has time to set in.
- Wear four-inch brimmed hats that, when worn, create a shadow that completely covers the head, face, nose, ears, and neck when they are in the sun.
- Wear sunglasses that protect from 100 percent of UVA & UVB (full-spectrum).
- Use lip balm that has a SPF rating of at least 15.
- Seek shade when possible.

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.

For persons who spend time in the sun be sure to:

- 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.

PPHD is helping many of the Panhandle pools become more sun safe. Pools can include supports to keep staff sun safe and model to pool attendees in addition to signs posted in and around the pool area to help remind pool patrons to be sun safe as well.

“Pool staff are the key to modeling good sun safe practices to the many children that frequent the pool each summer,” said Hansen. “Things like reminding pool patrons to reapply sunscreen when announcing the hourly rest breaks and staying properly hydrate are excellent ways to reinforce to the kiddos.”

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.