

For your health

Caring for Your Skin

Skin care for your skin type

A bad sunburn can cause everything from skin pain to nausea in the short run. And in the long run, unprotected exposure to the sun can lead to a host of problems, from skin dryness and wrinkles to cancer.

There are three main types of skin cancers:

Basal cell carcinomas (80 percent of all skin cancers) are the most easily treated type and usually appear as pearly, slow-growing, raised areas that may crust and bleed. They occur mostly on the face, neck and hands.

Squamous cell carcinomas (16 percent of skin cancers) are red or pink, scaly bumps, typically appearing on the face, hands and ears. These, too, can be easily treated if detected early.

Malignant melanomas (4 percent of skin cancers) are the most serious type of skin cancer. They often can be treated successfully if caught early but have the potential to be fatal. Melanomas usually begin as a dark brown or black flat spot with irregular borders that later can change shape or color. Malignant melanomas may also grow from a benign mole.

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What you can do

Clothing and hats are effective as basic protection against sun damage of any kind. Light-colored garments reflect the rays rather than absorbing the energy, so they keep you cooler. It's also wise to watch the clock when it comes to sun exposure. Peak sunlight hours are from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., so try to limit your exposure during those hours.

Sunscreen products are very effective as long as you apply them correctly. In general, most people apply less than half the amount of sunscreen that is needed for good protection and often miss the ears and the neck, both front and back.

The best way to apply sunscreen is to work down. Begin with the face, ears, neck, arms and hands, then the chest, abdomen, thighs, legs, feet, and then let someone else get your shoulders and back well covered. Also, reapply sunscreen every one and a half to two hours if you go swimming.

At Aetna, we believe there is nothing more important than your health. That's why we're pleased to bring you information to help you take an active role in the management of your health.



It also makes sense to know what type of sunscreen is right for you. Although sunscreens come in SPF (sun protection factors) as low as 2, choose at least an SPF 15 if you truly want to protect yourself from cancer-causing ultraviolet rays.

What kind of sun protection is necessary for certain individuals? For most people, SPF 15 or higher for everyday use and SPF 30 or higher for all-day use or full sun exposure during a day at the beach.

We want you to know®



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