

Sun Safety & Sunscreens

Sun safety isn't just about sunscreen. Follow these simple steps to stay sun safe...



Seek out shade, particularly between 11am and 3pm, when the sun is usually at its most intense



Wear loose-fitting clothing and a wide-brimmed hat when in the sun and wear a good pair of sunglasses



Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going out in the sun and re-apply every couple of hours throughout the day – you will need about a golf-ball-sized amount of cream for each application



Remember to re-apply when you emerge from cooling off in the water



Never use sunscreen to extend the time you would normally spend in the sun



Drink plenty of water, particularly in hot weather. Keeping your water intake up prevents dehydration and maintains a healthy bladder and kidneys; a healthy body helps to support healthy skin

Take care of children and babies

It is important to try and keep sun exposure to a minimum for young children and especially babies under the age of 6 months. Children should cover up in the sun and play in the shade where possible and use a sunscreen with at least SPF 30, with UVA protection and preferably water resistant.



How do I know my sunscreen will work?

Today's sunscreen products have been developed to help protect the skin against the damaging rays of the sun.

To make sure the sunscreen has the correct levels of protection against UVB and UVA rays, international standard test methods are used.

The SPF number labelled can be relied upon because as well as using the standard test method on a range of people, the product is checked many times in development to ensure it will give the expected level of protection.

There is a wide range of sunscreen products available to accommodate various lifestyles and budgets. All sunscreens must work as claimed, irrespective of the cost. However, it is important that you buy your sunscreens from a reputable retail outlet.

These results are compared with the development test results to make sure all the SPF numbers match.

This lengthy and robust development and testing process is what companies go through before they label their product and put it on the shelf.

What level of protection do I need?

Everyone reacts to the sun in their own way. Some people's skin is affected more by the sun's harmful rays than others. The paler our skin, the higher the protection level we'll require. Also, the strength of the sun's rays will vary according to where in the world we are.

The SPF (Sun Protection Factor) number on a sunscreen product tells us the level of protection that it provides against sunburn, caused by UVB rays. The higher the number, the greater the protection. This helps people make choices about what product suits them best. Sunscreens are also labelled with a simple rating of 'low', 'medium', 'high' or 'very high' to help us choose the right level.

Importantly, we should always choose a product that also protects against UVA rays. These are the rays that are known to accelerate ageing. Look for the symbol 'UVA' in a circle.

Lots of things affect how effective a sunscreen is: whether we've put enough on, whether we've been active and sweated it off, whether we've been in the water, whether we've reapplied it and how strong the sun is in whatever part of the world we are using it. Remember to re-apply after cooling off in the water; and don't forget when swimming the sun's rays will also penetrate the water.

Different types of products are available: lotions, creams and sprays and they may also be water resistant, and some may be coloured which is especially useful to encourage children to rub in their sunscreen. Check that the sneaky bits are covered like tips of the ears, chin, bottom of the feet and ankles, back of knees etc. Extended wear products are also available to help those people who cannot avoid being in the sun through work or sport activities and where reapplication may be more difficult. However remember to always read the instructions and never use sunscreen to spend longer in the sun.

Understanding your label

Labelled Protection Category	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Labelling Sun Protection Factor (SPF)	6, 10	15, 20, 25	30, 50	50+

Checking the ingredients

If you are allergic to a particular ingredient(s) then check the label for the full list of ingredients to make sure it is not there. The names used are the same throughout the EU and in many parts of the world

How to use and look after your sun products

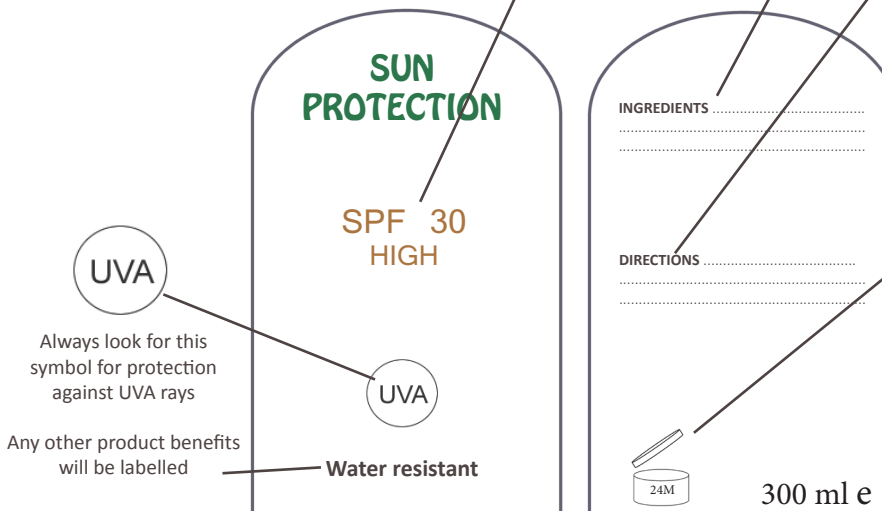
Always follow the instructions for use and apply 15-30 minutes before you go out in the sun. Keep your sunscreen in a cool dry place and discard small amounts of unused product after your holiday if your product has been out on the beach or in extremes of temperatures. When stored carefully, sunscreen will last a long time without losing its effectiveness. Remember if the product looks or smells odd, do not use it.

How long will it last?

This symbol tells us how many months the product remains usable after opening



If your product has a very limited shelf life (less than 30 months) then this symbol will give you the 'best before' date



Will I still tan?

Used correctly sunscreens will still allow the skin to tan, but we must remember that a tan means the skin has been damaged and is trying to protect itself against further damage. **So sunscreens should never be used to remain longer in the sun.** Damage to the skin (even without burning) from the sun's rays (UVB and UVA) can lead to premature ageing of the skin and increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

Where can I find out more?

www.thefactsabout.co.uk/sunscreens

www.thefactsabout.co.uk/sunneedtoknow

www.thefactsabout.co.uk/childrensunprotection

www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/prevention-and-awareness/sunsmart

www.bad.org.uk/for-the-public/sun-awareness-campaign