

# SUNBURN

Prolonged exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays is the primary cause of **skin aging and wrinkles**, as well as **skin cancer**.

Signs and symptoms of a sunburn:

- Skin usually will appear more **pink or red** than your normal skin tone
- In severe cases can peel or develop blisters
- Can be **painful** to touch



What causes sunburn?

- Sunburn results when the **amount of exposure to the sun** or other UV light source (tanning beds, sunlamps) **exceeds the ability of the body's protective pigment, melanin, to function**.
- People with less melanin (fair skin) have an increased risk for sunburns.
- Some medications increase risk for sunburn: sulfa drugs, tetracyclines, some diuretics, *Retin-A*, and even Benadryl (diphenhydramine HCl).

What to expect if you've been sunburned:

- Pain is worst 6-48 hours after sun exposure, peeling can start after 3-8 days.
- **Severe cases include blistering, swelling, and fever.**

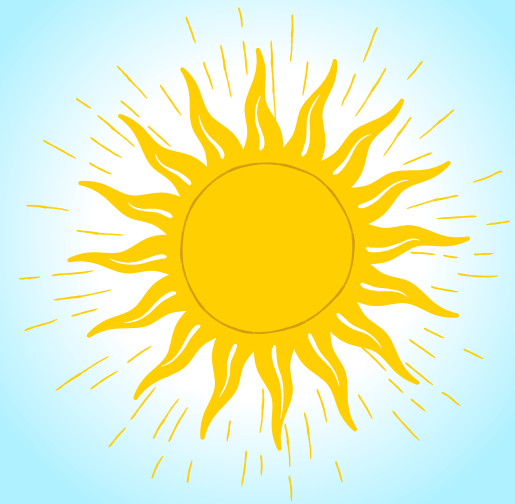
How to **prevent** a sunburn:



- **Be mindful of how long you have been in the sun.** In light-skinned people, a burn can occur in less than 15 minutes, while a dark-skinned person may tolerate the same exposure for hours.
- **Wear sunscreen with high sun protection factor (SPF).**
  - The lighter your skin, the higher SPF you should use, but aim for **at least SPF 30**.
  - **Makeup is now made with sunscreen protection** and will specify SPF on label.
- **Wear a hat, sunglasses, and protective clothing.** Brilliant colors and white reflect the sun onto the face, so wear muted colors, such as tan.

Sunburns have **very serious consequences**

- One blistering sunburn **doubles** your likelihood of developing **malignant melanoma (the deadliest type of skin cancer)**.
- Chronic exposure causes wrinkles, skin aging, age spots (lentigo), other skin cancers (**basal cell and squamous cell skin cancer**), and even cataracts.



How to treat a sunburn:

- **Cool the burn** by sponging with moist cloths or taking a cool bath or shower (not ice cold!)
- **Do not scrub, shave, or exfoliate**
- Use a soft towel to **gently pat skin dry**
- Use a sunburn Over-The-Counter (OTC) **remedy containing aloe vera**
- Use a light moisturizer or baby powder to **prevent chafing**, but avoid perfumes or scented items
- Rest in a **comfortable** position in a cool, quiet room, avoid the sun
- **Drink plenty of water**
- Use OTC **pain medications** like ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) to reduce pain, headache, and any fever

Seek medical care if:

- **you have a fever over 102° F or 39° C**
- **you have nausea, vomiting, dizziness, blistering, or severe pain**

Check out the latest updates and more details from the **Mayo Clinic:**



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