

SUN PROTECTION

Benefits:

- Sunscreens are crucial for sun protection.
- Sun damage to the skin from exposure to ultraviolet rays is a risk factor for skin cancer such as melanoma.

Precautions and Contraindications:

- As a general rule, babies 6 months of age or younger should not have sunscreen applied to their skin because their bodies may not be capable of tolerating the chemicals in sunscreens. Instead, they should be kept away from sun exposure.
- Everyone over 6 months of age should use a sunscreen regularly unless they and their doctors decide it would be better to protect the skin in other ways.

Pre-Procedure:

- To avoid sunburn, people should limit sun exposure during the peak hours of 10 AM to 3 PM, wear protective clothing, and use a sunscreen.
- The sunscreen should be applied at least a half hour before going outside to allow time for the sunscreen to soak in and take effect.
- Be sure to choose a sunscreen that is considered to be “Broad Spectrum,” as this will ensure protection against both UVA and UVB rays.

Procedure:

- As a general rule, sunscreen should be applied very liberally to clean skin. Anyone who skimps won’t receive full protection.
- Sunscreen should be reapplied every 2–3 hours. Some research has shown that the best protection is achieved by application 15–30 minutes before exposure, followed by one reapplication 15–30 minutes after the sun exposure begins. Further reapplication is only necessary after activities such as swimming, sweating, and rubbing.

Post-Procedure:

- Sunscreen should be reapplied at least every 2 hours when staying outdoors for a prolonged period, and after swimming, bathing, perspiring heavily, or drying off with a towel or handkerchief.
- Water- and perspiration-resistant sunscreens are available; however, even their protection will not last indefinitely.

Maintenance and Infection Control:

- An effective program also includes limiting sun exposure and wearing protective clothing.
- Refer to OSHA and your state board.

The ABCDE Rule for Early Detection of Skin Cancer:

- Asymmetry: one side does not match the other side.
- Border Irregularity: edges are ragged, notched, or blurred.
- Color: pigmentation is not uniform.
- Diameter: Greater than 6.0 mm. Any sudden or continuing increase in size should be of specific concern.
- Evolving: any mole that is new or changing.