



## Childbirth and parent educators play a critical role in protecting babies

UV rays have a cumulative or collective effect. Some UV rays can pass through windows. Even on hot days, lightweight, comfortable long sleeve shirts, long pants, and a sun hat should be worn when outdoors. Dry fabric is usually more protective than wet fabric. Most sunscreen products expire within 2 to 3 years, so check sunscreen expiration dates.

## Who we need to educate

Expecting and new parents  
Family members and siblings  
Close family friends  
Child care providers

## When we should educate

Childbirth classes  
Baby-bathing demonstrations  
Baby and me classes  
Breast-feeding classes  
At hospital discharge  
During pediatrician visits

# HELP PROTECT THE SKIN BABIES ARE IN

## Instructor Talking Points

### SKIN CANCER RISK

- A large part of a person's lifetime sun exposure happens before they turn 18. Skin damage adds up over time.
- One blistering sunburn could double a child's risk for skin cancer later in life.
- The more exposure the skin gets to the sun or other light with UVA and UVB rays the more increased risk for skin cancer later in life.

### BABIES AND SUNSCREEN

- Doctors recommend that babies younger than six months old not use sunscreen.
- Sunscreen research has mostly been done on children older than six months.
- Infants have more skin surface for the size of their body compared to adults.
- Sunscreens are made from chemicals and doctors feel it is better to wait until babies are six months or older before using sunscreen.
- It is OK to use sunscreen on small areas like the nose, cheeks, or fingers if needed.

### FIND OR MAKE SHADE

- When you and the baby are outside, find shade under trees, picnic shelters, or other shade structures.
- Use a stroller, umbrella, or portable cover that creates shade for the baby.
- The sun's rays are most dangerous between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Play in the shade or be careful to cover up and use sunscreen between those times.
- If your shadow is shorter than you are; seek shade.

### COVER UP

- It's not always easy to stay out of the sun. That's why it is important to dress the baby in long sleeve shirts and pants.
- A hat brim should be wide enough to shade eyes, nose, face, ears, and back of the neck.
- Tighter weave clothing has more protection than loose weave. You can tell by holding the clothes up to the light; the more light you can see, the less protection there is.

Talking points continued on reverse side...

## LOUDY DAYS

- Cloudy days can be dangerous because many of the same burning rays, at least 80%, can get through light cloud cover.
- On cloudy days you don't feel as hot and may not realize you and your baby are getting burned.
- Think about sun protection all year long, not just summer.

## ROTECT EYES

- The same sun rays that can lead to sunburns and skin cancer can cause eye diseases later in life including cataracts and macular degeneration.
- Get sunglasses with labels showing 98%-100% of UVA and UVB ray blockage. It's best if the sunglasses also wrap around and protect the corners of the eyes.
- Children need real sunglasses with the same UVA and UVB protection as adults.

## SUNSCREEN

- Sunscreen should say Broad Spectrum Protection which protects from both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use SPF 30 or higher.
- Put it on 10 to 20 minutes BEFORE going out in the sun.
- Reapply the sunscreen after two hours or after swimming or sweating.
- Use sunscreen on cloudy days.
- Use sunscreen all year round. Snow, water, concrete, and sand all reflect the sun's rays and you can burn faster.
- After the baby is six months old it is OK to use sunscreen but continue to dress them in protective clothing. Sunscreen alone may not prevent some kinds of skin cancer.

## MELANOMA

- The most deadly form of skin cancer is melanoma. People who have a higher risk for melanoma often have a lot of moles, are fair skinned, light hair and eyes, and burn easily.
- However, anyone can get melanoma or other skin cancers. People with naturally darker skin sometimes get melanoma on the palms of their hands, soles of the feet, or scalp. Men have a higher risk for getting melanoma on the back.
- New research shows that people under the age of 30 who used tanning beds have 75% more chance of getting skin cancer than those who don't use tanning beds.
- There is no safe way to tan. There are topical lotions and creams that can give the skin a tanned look which are safe but don't protect from sun exposure.

## BE A ROLE MODEL

- Research shows that older children will be more likely to wear protective clothing, seek shade, use sunscreen, and protect themselves from the sun if their parents do.
- Any type of tightly woven, light weight, long sleeve shirt will work. Any type of wide brim hat will work. Ball caps leave ears and neck exposed.

