

Sun Safety and Tanning Alternatives



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- 1 Stay out of the sun as much as possible between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the sun's at its strongest.
- 2 Use sunscreen with an SPF number of 15 or higher. Make sure it's a "broad spectrum" sunscreen that blocks out both kinds of ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun.
- 3 Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before you go outdoors. Re-apply it after swimming or sweating. Continue to re-apply it every 2 hours or so.
- 4 Wear sunglasses with a label that says they block out 99-100% of the sun's rays.
- 5 Use sunscreen lip balm.
- 6 Wear a wide-brimmed hat that shades your neck, ear, eyes and head.
- 7 Cover up when you can. Wear loose lightweight clothes that protect you from the sun.
- 8 Check the daily Ultraviolet Index (UVI) before you leave the house.

The UVI describes the amount of UV rays reaching the earth at a particular time. If the UVI is 5 or higher, you should be extra careful about your time in the sun. (You can find each day's UVI in your local newspaper or at: www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html)

If you follow these rules, you're probably not going to get much of a tan this year. But you might still like that golden tanned look. There's always indoor tanning, right? Well, indoor tanning uses UV rays that are pretty much the same stuff that comes from the sun. So indoor tanning is just as dangerous as outdoor tanning.

What to do??

When in doubt, just remember **Slip! Slop!** **Slap!** That's the simple, easy-to-remember slogan of the Australian Cancer Council. It works like this:

SLIP! Slip on a shirt.

SLOP! Slop on SPF 15+ sunscreen.

SLAP! Slap on a wide-brimmed hat.

Check out these tanning alternatives. They're safe, they're not expensive and they can still give you a nice tan.

Sunless self-tanners – These come in many forms (sprays, lotions, gels and towelettes) that you apply yourself. These self-tanners contain dihydroxyacetone (DHA), which temporarily stains the dead outer layers of your skin. These "fake bakes" last anywhere from a few days to a week.

Airbrush tans at salons – A salon technician sprays a DHA solution on your face and body to create a temporary tan. These airbrush tans are usually more natural-looking than the ones you get from self-tanners.

There are two important things to remember about these tanning alternatives:

- They don't protect you from getting a sunburn. So you'll still need to lather on the sunscreen when you go outdoors.
- Their primary ingredient, DHA, is not approved for internal use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It should *never* enter your eyes, mouth, nose or ears. If you get an airbrush tan, the salon technician *must* provide protection for these areas.

Finally, *never* use any kind of tanning pills. They are *not* approved by the FDA and can cause very serious health problems.