



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

How to choose and apply sunscreen

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With the warmer weather of Spring, wearing shorts and short sleeves is already an option on some of our days! It is easy to forget to wear sunscreen when you have been covered up by coats and hats for months. It's important to remember that everyone needs to wear sunscreen. People of all skin colors get skin cancer.

The American Academy of Dermatology has a few sunscreen recommendations for you.

When you select sunscreen, remember:

- Choose sunscreen with SPF of 30 or greater. Higher SPFs than that don't offer much additional protection and they may give a false sense of security about staying outside longer.
- Choose sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB radiations, labeled as "broad spectrum".
- Sunscreen that is water resistant for 40 to 80 minutes is preferred.
- Protect your lips with lip balm containing SBP or 30 or higher and reapply often.
- Budget brands are just as effective as more expensive brands.

How to use sunscreen:

- Most people don't use enough. Use one ounce spread over every part of the body exposed to the sun. That's about the size of a golf ball or enough to fill up a shot glass.
- Apply 15 to 30 minutes prior to sun exposure.
- Reapply to skin every two to three hours.
- Apply every 60 to 90 minutes if sweating, rubbing skin, toweling off, swimming or if spray sunscreen is used. Sprays wash off more quickly.
- Replace sunscreen by the expiration date on the bottle, or if there is no date, after three years. If sunscreen is used daily as recommended, a bottle will not last long. When purchasing a sunscreen that doesn't have an expiration date, write the date on the bottle so you know when to discard it.
- Sunscreen is still recommended on cloudy days and when spending time in the shade. Up to 80% of the sun's rays can pass through clouds.

Sunscreen is just part of the safety package. Clothing, hats and sunglasses also help protect from the sun. A good rule of thumb is to seek shade when your shadow is shorter than you are.

If you carefully follow the guidelines, you can help prevent sunburns and prevent skin cancer. Don't welcome Spring with sunburn!