

HOT TOPIC

How's your sunscreen IQ? There's a lot to learn: SPF, broad spectrum, UVA, UVB. Sit back and soak up these sun-safety facts and tips.

BY LISA HANNAM AND EMILIE DINGFELD

ARAYIS A RAY IS A RAY?

Not all sunrays are equal. There are two kinds of skin-damaging ultraviolet rays: UVA (long wave) and UVB (medium wave). Both are harmful and have been linked to skin cancer and aging (um, no thanks!), but they vary slightly in their effect: UVBs cause sunburns, but don't go through windows. UVAs, however, are responsible for tanning and premature aging and can penetrate through glass. "UVB levels are variable throughout the year and will peak in the summer," says Dr. Jason Rivers, a Vancouver-based dermatologist in private practice with Pacific Dermaesthetics. "UVA levels are relatively constant all year long, with slight variations."

GLOW PICK:

Biotherm Lait Solaire Melting Milk for Face & Body SPF 30, \$35 for 400 ml



HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?



SHOT GLASS
(FOR THE
COCKTAIL SET)



GOLF BALL
(FOR THE
TEETOTALLERS)

You need about one ounce of sunscreen to cover your body and a teaspoon for your face. "It is a lot of sunscreen," says Dr. Curtis Cole, vice president of research and development at Johnson & Johnson in Skillman, N.J. "If you use the right amount, it might feel like you've put on too much. Always put on more than you think you need." Dr. Rivers agrees: "Most people don't put on enough sunscreen, to the point where an SPF 30 is really only working as an SPF 7 or 15."

GLOW PICK:

Etival Laboratoire Ambient Light Face Cream SPF 50, \$25 for 60 ml



HOW MUCH ARE WE REALLY USING?

"In reality, people only put on a quarter or half of the amount they are supposed to use," says Dr. Cole. "But SPF is proportional to the amount you put on. If you only put on a quarter of the amount, you're only going to get a quarter of the SPF."



Since we don't seem to use enough sunscreen, why can't companies reduce the amount of product we need? Industry insiders say SPF regulations determine the amount we need to use. Globally, all sunscreen manufacturers are required to test two milligrams of product per centimetre-square of skin (which equals an ounce for your whole body). And that, apparently, won't change anytime soon. So think of it like shoes and money: The more, the better.



GLOW PICKS:

From left: **Coppertone Sunscreen Oil Free Mousse SPF 60**, \$14 for 170 g, **Vichy Capital Soleil High Protection Suncare Oil SPF 30**, \$30 for 177 ml, **Ombrelle Sport Sweat Resistant Continuous Spray SPF 60**, \$21 for 140 ml, **Life Brand Sunthera3 Face Sunscreen Stick SPF 60**, \$13 for 13.3 g

11 A.M.
TO 4 P.M.



That is when the sun's rays are at their most intense. Be sure to wear sun-protective clothing and sunscreen, and seek shade—especially during these times. Also check the UV Index (The Weather Network, sponsored by Shoppers Drug Mart, reports this number); a rating of three or more means you should take the above precautions. Enjoy patio season—just drink your icy mojitos after four o'clock.

CHEMICAL VS. PHYSICAL FILTERS

CHEMICAL-BASED SUNSCREENS

contain organic filters, like oxybenzone, which form a thin layer on your skin to absorb the sun's rays, stopping them from penetrating your skin. Bonus: It doesn't leave a white residue. But don't confuse the term "organic" on sunscreens with what you would see on food- or beauty-product labels. It's chemical-lab speak to mean that the molecules contain carbon. "Inorganic" means they don't.

PHYSICAL SUNSCREENS

are made of inorganic compounds, such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, which form a barrier against sunrays. "It works like a disco ball, reflecting the UV rays and absorbing some of them," says Hélène Meaudre, Sun Care Laboratories scientific coordinator for Biotherm in Paris. They have a bad rap for their chalky texture, but some of the new formulations use nanoparticles for a cleaner result.

DON'T CRY, IT'S JUST SUNSCREEN

So, you're sensitive. If you find your skin reacts to body and face creams, try a formula specifically made for sensitive skin. It should be free of harsh ingredients, masking agents and fragrances, and should be labelled non-comedogenic.

GLOW PICK:

Neutrogena Pure & Free Sensitive Sunscreen Lotion SPF 50, \$20 for 73 ml

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT SPF?

The Sun Protection Factor is a rating system that measures (in a lab) how long it takes skin to burn with that specific sunscreen. The lower the SPF number, the faster you'll burn.

Here's the percentage of UVB rays you're protected against, according to SPF:

SPF 15	~~~~~	93% of UVB rays
SPF 30	~~~~~	97% of UVB rays
SPF 50	~~~~~	98% of UVB rays

While the percentages seem similar, "these numbers do make a difference," says Meaudre. And if exposure to sunlight gives you a skin rash or irritation, take note. "Since these pathologies [skin ailments] are primarily UVA-induced, it is crucial to have the right UVA coverage and protection. Broad-spectrum sunscreens [that protect against both UVA and UVB] are key, as well as an SPF of 30 or higher," she says.



PRODUCT PHOTOS: CARLO MENDOZA

5 STEPS TO PREVENTING SUNBURNS

Avoid getting burnt with these steps from Dr. Benjamin Barankin, a Toronto-based dermatologist and medical director at the Toronto Dermatology Centre.

1 Your hair protects your scalp, but beware of your part and any areas where the scalp is exposed. Put sunscreen on it or wear a hat.

2 Check your blind spots. The sun will burn any unprotected skin, often where you least expect it. Be mindful not only of your face but of your ears, neck, chest and the back of your hands. The delicate skin on your eyelids and under your eyes need some sunscreen love too. And don't neglect the tops of your feet, sandal lovers.

3 Even if your makeup contains SPF, wear a separate sunscreen. Sound excessive? It isn't. Sunscreen ingredients tend to break down after two to three hours—and most of us don't reapply midday—so the protection offered in some makeup isn't enough.

4 Always wear more sunscreen than you think you need. Apply it as you normally do, then reapply once more.

5 For a day outside, use a minimum of SPF 30, but if you burn easily, have a sun-sensitive condition like rosacea or are on a medication that makes your skin photosensitive, try SPF 60. Don't forget to reapply.

GLOW PICKS: Hawaiian Tropic Sheer Touch Oil-Free Sunscreen SPF 30, \$15 for 240 ml, La Roche-Posay Anthelios Ultra-Fluid Lotion for Face SPF 60, \$27 for 50 ml

HEY, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS?

- The Food and Drug Administration in the U.S. is regulating broad-spectrum labelling on sunscreens, so that they are tested for both UVA and UVB rays.
- Ever wonder why you see SPF 50+ on some sunscreens? In Europe that's how they label products with SPF ratings over 50. It's likely a European brand.

GLOW PICK: Bioderma Photoderm Max SPF 50+, \$20 for 40 ml



4 WAYS TO DEAL WITH A SUNBURN



GLOW EXTRA:

For more sun-care tips, visit glow.ca.

1

Rehydrate: A sunburn can be very dehydrating, so be sure to drink lots of fluids and apply cool compresses to your red skin several times a day.

2

Soothe: Moisturize with after-sun products that contain aloe. Don't use numbing lotions or creams like benzocaine or lidocaine—they will intensify the heat on your skin.

3

Take the pain away: To relieve the ouch-factor, simply pop an ibuprofen or acetaminophen as directed on the package.

4

Cover up: In addition to covering up red and peeling skin for vanity's sake, avoid making it worse with more sun exposure. Besides, do you really want to show off those sunburn lines?

GLOW PICK: Life Sunthera3 Hydrating After Sun Mask, \$2.50 each

REPAIR RX: HOW TO FIX SUN-DAMAGED SKIN

Crow's feet, pigmentation spots and fine lines hint at a sun-filled youth. Dr. Barankin says that while you can't reverse sun damage, there are things you can do to improve your skin's appearance. "Products that contain retin A or vitamin C can help fade some discoloration." To boost skin's collagen and help reduce the look of fine lines, he recommends chemical peels or microdermabrasion. Laser resurfacing, which sloughs off the top layers of skin, can help restore your glow, too, he says.

TRACKING YOUR SKIN

Sun exposure is one of the most common risk factors for skin cancer, so check your skin regularly for any abnormalities and report them to your doctor or dermatologist.

90% *of skin cancer can be cured if detected early enough,*

says Laura Henriques, La Roche-Posay's medical liaison manager in Toronto. She suggests you create an account on myskincheck.ca to log the location and appearance of moles and skin markings. By keeping your profile up to date, you can monitor any changes and bring them to your dermatologist's attention.

"CAN SUNSCREEN CAUSE SKIN CANCER?"

You may have heard that oxybenzone and nanoparticles found in some sunscreens can raise your risk for cancer. But before you toss your sunscreen bottles, consider this: The Canadian Cancer Society still encourages sunscreen use. In a press release it stated that it's "not concerned at this

time about oxybenzone in sunscreen. The research on oxybenzone is limited, and so far no animal or human studies suggest this chemical might cause cancer." And nanoparticle research is in its preliminary stages. "There's no data at this time that suggests sunscreen products are carcinogenic

in humans," says Dr. Rivers. Sun and skin experts agree that by not wearing sunscreen, you put yourself at a greater risk of getting cancer than you would from using sunscreen. But of course, your best protection is to avoid prolonged periods in the sun, when possible. ⑧