

Day at the Beach

REALITY CHECK Waiting until you're ankle deep in sand to apply SPF is asking for trouble. Apply it before you step outdoors—and even before you step into your bathing suit. "You're less likely to miss a spot or get burned if a strap moves when you put on sunblock nude," Dr. Baumann says. To ensure every last inch is covered, use at least 4 ounces of product. It might seem excessive—and that's a good thing. "If you feel like you can't sit down because you'd leave a big stain, you're on the right track," Dr. Shamban says. And when you do head out, take the bottle with you. "You'll need to reapply from head to toe at least every two hours and immediately after emerging from the water and toweling off," says Dr. Fusco, who recommends using a waterproof formula to ward off harmful UV rays while swimming. If the thought of smearing on lotion all day is less than appealing, build a base with a heavy-duty UVA and UVB lotion (in the SPF 80 or 90 range), then switch to a fine spray that provides even coverage without the goop factor. Finally, remember that UV rays can fluctuate in intensity on any given day. Check the UV index online (epa.gov/sunwise1/uvindex.html) to find out how quickly you can burn, or wear a UV-gauging wristband that changes color when you've reached your sun-exposure limit. At that point, pack it in.

"One bottle of sunscreen should last two people for about a day at the beach - not an entire summer."
-Leslie Baumann dermatologist



Best Heavy-Duty Protection
Coppertone Ultraguard waterproof sunscreen
SPF 90+, \$10
drugstore.com

Best Clear Formula
Banana Boat Sport Performance clear spray sunscreen
SPF 85, \$11; drugstore.com

Best UV Alert
UV Sun Sense ultraviolet-gauging wristbands,
\$8/7; amazon.com

Best long-Lasting
Bull Frog Waterproof Surfer Formula gel sunblock
SPF 36, \$10; drugstore.com

A fine spray makes reapplying a breeze.



Mini Boden nylon-and-elastane surfsuit with UPS 40+, \$38; bodenusa.com. Wallaroo Lorikeet cotton hat, \$20; wallaroo-hats.com

BEACH BABE

Protecting your tyke's delicate skin from the sun is as easy as ABC.

1. Take turns. Children are notoriously squirmy when you apply sunscreen, says N.Y.C. dermatologist Jody A. Levine. The solution? "Put sunscreen on your kids, then let them put it on you."
2. Avoid hide-and-see sunscreens. "Spray-on formulas are easy to apply but really hard to see," says Dr. Levine, making it possible to overlook areas. Instead, choose a more visible lotion or gel.
3. Baby your baby's skin. Shield infants under 6 months with long sleeves and a hat, and use an SPF 50 sunscreen containing zinc oxide, which is less irritating.

Got Burned?
It can happen to the best of us. Here's how to manage the damage:

Moisturize Keeping skin hydrated will speed healing and may reduce scarring, says Dr. Fusco. Look for thick creams with soothing aloe vera or calendula.

Tread gently Avoid products with retinol and topical acids like glycolic and AHA, which exacerbate the burn.

Don't be a repeat offender Reapplying sunscreen and going out again before you've fully healed can cause serious harm and scarring, says Dr. Fusco.