

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Sun Protection – “A MUST FOR ARIZONA WINTERS”

If there is one thing you can count on while living in or visiting the Arizona desert is plenty of sunshine. Another opportunity that presents itself to sun lovers is that they have an abundance of dermatologists to choose from in Southern Arizona. Many of us disregarded the messages about the harmful effects of too much sun exposure when we were younger and now we can pay the price for neglecting the warnings. The skin and the eyes deteriorate even without much sun exposure as we age. Learning easy to accomplish preventative measures, at any age, can help us to reduce the possibility of pain and misery if we have to go through surgery or aggressive dermatological treatments.

Hat's That Provide Head Protection



Let's start with the top of the body first. More men than women can start losing their hair early in life. If your genetic disposition does not cause you to experience rapidly thinning hair, then you're lucky. By the time we get into our 60's and beyond, most of us will experience some hair thinning. Wearing a hat can greatly reduce sun damage and choosing the style with the most protection is ideal. Wearing a baseball type cap can protect you head, forehead and your eyes, to a degree. Wearing a hat that has a substantial brim all around it will help protect the sides of your face and your ears. The style illustrated here is used often in a desert climate and it has some features that are very convenient. The Aussie style hat, depending on the model and manufacturer, might feature an inner size adjustable band for that perfect fit and helps keep your hat on in the wind. Some are soakable in water to keep you cool longer on hot days. Most feature a mesh crown for air cooling. The idea brim size is a minimum of 3.25" from the head band to the edge of the brim. To find a resource: Google or Bing – “**Aussie Style Hat**”.

Protective Eye Wear



The desirable choice is to buy sunglasses that provide 100% UV protection and are labeled as UV 400 protection. That means the glasses protect your eyes from both UVA and UVB radiation. The tint of the lens is a feature having little to do with the UV protection of the glasses. A clear lens with no tint and 100% UV protection is better for your eyes than dark, heavily tinted sunglasses without UV protection. Dark lenses without adequate UV protection are actually worse for your eyes than not wearing glasses at all. The dark tint causes your pupils to become dilated, thus exposing your eyes to more harmful UV light. While polarized and anti-glare lenses may offer better image clarity, a more comfortable viewing experience and give you better vision when driving or playing sports, they have nothing to do with UV protection. That being said, most polarized lenses also offer adequate UV protection. If you don't

think you need sunglasses on a cloudy day you're incorrect. UV rays are just as potent on a cloudy day as they are on a clear day, and proper eye and skin protection is always needed. For more complete information, it's wise to consult your eye doctor and the following web link will reveal an article published in the **American Academy of Ophthalmology**. <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/top-sunglasses-tips>

Clothing That Provides Body Protection from the Sun

The Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) rating system measures the UV protection provided by fabric. It is very similar to the SPF rating system used for sunscreens. A garment with a UPF of 50 only allows 1/50th of the UV radiation falling on the surface of the garment to pass through it. **The Skin Cancer Foundation** considers clothing to be the most safe and effective defense in the fight against skin cancer and aging.



Cotton is by far one of the most absorbent textiles ever produced. It can hold many times its weight in water. In fact, it is used in the fabrication of not only clothes, but other products that are used to absorb liquid, more so than any other material. It is the fibers that make up cotton that causes it to absorb water. Natural fabrics tend to be much more absorbent and more comfortable than synthetic fabrics. The looseness of the fibers of the natural fabric also allow for it to be more breathable, making it a better choice for your skin.

Bamboo feels like silk when wearing it. This silkiness lends it to being a very easy fabric to both drape and wear, making it very desirable to designers. Bamboo fabric also has the ability to block UV rays 417 times better than cotton fabric. Bamboo, when used as a plant based raw material, is processed into a cellulose type product and extruded into fiber for weaving various fabric material. The fiber, derived from the bamboo plant, is also used as stuffing for pillows and industry is finding other finished product applications for this rapidly renewable resource.

Polyester is a man-made fiber; it's basically plastic. In fact, plastic bottles are actually recycled into fiber that is then woven into polyester fabric. Quality polyester fiber, when made into fabric for clothing, holds its shape very well and doesn't shrink. Unlike cotton, polyester isn't absorbent. Very often polyester is blended with cotton, but it still depends on the density and thickness of the weave as to how good a garment is going to perform with respect to sun protection.

Who and what can we believe? As indicated in the information above, the various fibers not only have absorbency characteristics, but also the cross-section and weaving techniques of fibers into clothing fabric can determine the fabrics ability to block UV rays from the sun. Fabric color also plays an important role in the ability to block sunlight and heat. Wear a black shirt in Southern Arizona in August at noon and you will be much more uncomfortable than if the shirt color is white. The density and stitch rate of the fabric also plays an important role in reducing sun penetration. If you can't afford UPF+ rated clothing, then the next best would be 100% cotton in a close stitch rate and a high density white fabric. The ads for polyester clothing with performance claims stating that the fabric wicks away the moisture and are cooler are exaggerated. As stated previously, the fiber is plastic.

Sunscreen Lotions

Dermatologists emphasize how important it is to use a good quality sunscreen lotion. Recent research indicates that skin damage and cancer can be reduced by over 50% if you use a sunscreen when your skin is exposed to the sun. The website entitled WebMD has substantial information about choosing sunscreen products. The following link will help you to make a more informed choice: <http://www.webmd.com/beauty/features/whats-best-sunscreen#1>. The product you choose could technically be very good at protecting you, but if you don't like how it goes on and/or feels on your skin, then chances are you're not going to use it. A rating of 30 SPF is usually adequate for almost everyone.



A new generation formula of sunscreen with the ability to offer a high level of protection for a longer period of time has just been announced by researchers from the University of Arizona. The concept in developing this new formula is that sunscreen containing this technology will greatly reduce the ability for the main protective ingredient known as oxybenzone from penetrating into the skin. The protective ability of the oxybenzone stays on the surface of the skin and therefore lasts longer requiring fewer

applications. Chances are that this new discovery will not be ready and available for sale to consumers for the 2017 fall-winter season. For additional information, the following link gives a more complete explanation:

<https://uanews.arizona.edu/story/uainvented-sunscreen-licensed-leading-alo-vera-supplier>

Product advertising can sometimes mislead us into assuming we are protected, but in reality we might not be. As an example, some cosmetic products advertise sun protection, but the primary function of cosmetic products is to make your skin look nicer. It's rare that a cosmetic product will contain adequate SPF sun protection. Many so-called "daily moisturizers" are only SPF 15, and the **American Academy of Dermatology** recommendations call for using sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher. It's also worth noting that SPF is not cumulative. A person who puts on one coat of SPF 15, allows it to absorb into the skin, then put on another coat, is not getting the results of applying SPF 30.

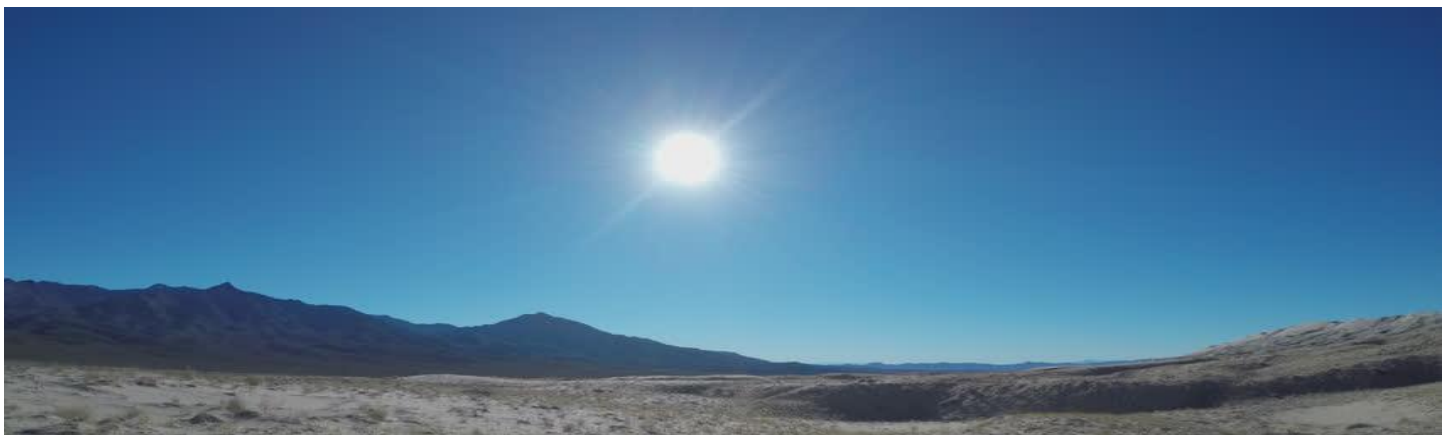


So that your skin remains protected throughout the day, sunscreen needs to be re-applied every two hours while out in the sun. If you're indoors for more than two hours and then go outside, you need to reapply sunscreen to skin areas that will be directly exposed to the sun. If possible when going outside, perhaps for your lunchtime, walk on the shady side of the street. Wear a wide brim hat and better than the hat, use a special umbrella with sunray reflective fabric coating. The umbrella is made of a fabric utilizing a "radiant barrier" type material. The look might not represent the most favorable fashion statement, but the material does adequately reflect the sun and you will be noticed. Search the web for: **Sun Reflecting Umbrella**



Lips, the bottoms of feet, in-between fingers and toes, underarms and ears are areas of the body that can be subjected to extensive sun exposure, but are often not treated with adequate sunscreen. Applying SPF 30 sunscreen stick on your lips, and reapplied throughout the day, will greatly increase your protection.

The **American Association of Dermatology** on their website at <https://www.aad.org/public/skin-hair-nails/skin-care/sunscreen> has useful information to guide you in purchasing sunscreen products that you could be comfortable using and hopefully will work for you. Additionally your pharmacist, dermatologist and primary care doctor can help with professional advice that will help you to understand how to protect your skin. Proper product choice in addition to disciplined application and the use of quality products can enhance the longevity of your skin.



Our beautiful Arizona sun is one of the most alluring features that beckon people to live in and visit our enticing state. Enjoy our sunshine and mild upcoming winter weather but don't be fooled into thinking that our sun is harmless through the fall and winter months. Protect yourself and help your loved ones and neighbors do the same.

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