



Sunburn

Fact

Sunburn is caused by overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. UV rays are the invisible component of sunshine therefore exposure also occurs on hazy and foggy days, not just when the sun shines brightly. Signs of sunburn include red, painful and sometimes swollen skin (first-degree burn), and if severe may lead to blisters (second-degree burn). The best treatment is therefore prevention.

Prevention

- Try to avoid being out between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. during the time of peak sun intensity.
- If appropriate, dress your child in lightweight cotton clothing with long sleeves and long pants as well as a wide-brimmed hat.
- If your child is at least 4 months old, always apply sunscreen in warm weather even if it's a little cloudy. It is recommended to use a sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of at least SPF 15. It should also be PABA free and offer both UVA and UVB protection.
- When using sunscreen, apply it liberally at least 30 minutes before time out in the sun, and reapply about every 1 to 2 hours.

Treatment

- Cool compresses or a cool bath as soon as possible.
- If at least 1 year old, give ibuprofen (acetaminophen if younger) to relieve pain and inflammation.
- Avoid petroleum jellies or butter since these further retain heat within the skin.
- Offer extra fluids to replace fluids lost from sunburned skin.
- Leave closed blisters intact since this acts as a natural "Band-Aid" for healing. For broken blisters, keep the area clean and apply an over-the-counter antibiotic ointment such as Neosporin or Bacitracin 3-4 times daily.

Seek Medical Attention If

- Your child is unable to see well due to eye pain
- Signs of infection like unexplained fever, increased pain after 2 days, red streaks, or draining pus