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## Q&A: Kids and Summer Sun Safety

By **KATHY KIM  
LANGEVIN, M.D.**

Special to the Palisadian-Post

**Q: At what age is it safe to apply sunscreen to an infant?**

Dr. Langevin: I recommend applying sunscreen beginning at age six months. Prior to this age, avoiding direct sunlight is best.

If you are going to the beach or another sunny area, bring an umbrella and dress your baby in appropriate clothing (think long sleeves and pants) along with a hat, ideally with a 4-inch brim, and protective sunglasses. Trying to avoid the peak sun hours of 10 a.m.-2 p.m. is also prudent.

**Q: My kids go to an all day beach/surf camp. I put sunscreen on them in the morning. How many times during the day should I tell them to reapply?**

Dr. Langevin: Applying sunscreen about every two hours is best, more frequent-

ly if they have been sweating or in the water. Educate your kids about wearing protective clothing (rash guards, long sleeves, pants and hats) and seeking shade whenever possible. Sunscreen should be applied to dry skin 15 minutes before outdoor exposure. Luckily, many camps have become savvy about the need to reapply sunscreen and set aside time to do so.

**Q: Which sunscreen is best for infants and kids? Which chemical do I look for? What SPF is best for summer camp activities?**

Dr. Langevin: For children, I generally recommend physical sunscreens that contain only zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide as they are less likely to cause irritation. Ideally it would contain both. That being said, I advocate any sunscreen if one will reapply it.

The American Academy of Dermatology recommends an SPF of at least 30. Make sure you are applying enough. A typical four-ounce bottle



**Dr. Kathy Langevin**

Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

should not last long. To get the SPF protection listed, an adult should apply one ounce of sunscreen (about a shot glass or golf ball size) to sun-exposed areas, adjusted accordingly for kids depending on their size.

**Q: Do you have to reapply sunscreen even if it says that it is "waterproof" or that it has "all day protection?"**

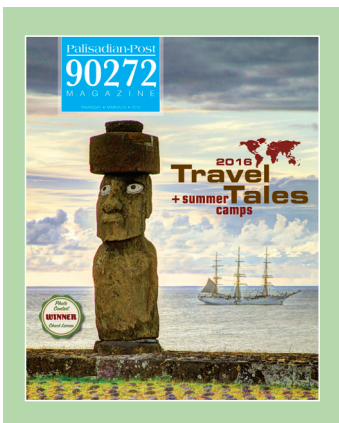
Dr. Langevin: Sunscreens can no longer claim to be waterproof, only water resistant (up to 40 min in water) or very water resistant (up to 80 min). However, once your child has been sweating regularly or swimming, sunscreen should be reapplied.

**Q: Which types of sunscreen are best: cream, stick or spray?**

Dr. Langevin: In general, cream formulations are best for the face, and sticks are great for touch ups, especially around the eyes and ears. If using a spray, make sure it is not inhaled. Spray it into your palm before applying it to face. In addition, bear in mind that the skin to which it is applied needs to be completely covered (and wet) to get the necessary protection.

Set a good example for your kids by letting them see mom and dad put on sunscreen too. Don't forget your protective clothing, hats and sunglasses.

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