

# Sunscreen has a shelf life and other facts to know

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Did you know sunscreen has a shelf life and can expire? Or that too much heat or cold can ruin a new bottle?

Protecting your skin from harmful sun rays will help against inflammation, burns, premature aging and, most importantly, [skin cancer](#)

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Dr. Dawn Davis, a Mayo Clinic dermatologist, has more on sunscreen shelf life and other facts to help make decisions as you head into the sun.

You might think a dermatologist is going to ask you to ban the sun.

"There's nothing wrong with being outside in the sun," says Dr. Davis.

UV, or [ultraviolet light](#), is a carcinogen. That's where sunscreen helps.

"Sunscreen can act as a [carcinogen](#) barrier to help keep your skin safe," says Dr. Davis.

Keep these sunscreen facts in mind when you're reaching for your favorite bottle:

- Sunscreen can expire, affecting the [active ingredient](#) and the preservative.
- Sunscreen is sensitive to [extreme temperatures](#). Keep it out of direct sun, and don't let it freeze during winter storage.
- People of color need to wear sunscreen.

Bottom line, everyone over age six months needs sunscreen—babies included.

"It is a layman's myth that children do not get skin cancer. And it's a layman's myth that a person of color cannot have skin cancer," Dr. Davis says.

And lastly, Dr. Davis says, "There literally is no such thing as a waterproof sunscreen."

Apply sunscreen, and after you get wet, reapply.

## Sunscreen application tips

To be effective, sunscreen needs to be used liberally so be generous with your portions.

It's recommended to use 1 ounce (30 milliliters) of [sunscreen](#)—the amount in a shot glass—to cover exposed parts of the body. You might need to apply more, depending on your body size. If you have a 4-ounce (118-milliliter) bottle, you'll use about a quarter of it during one application.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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