



sun DAYS

Try our foolproof strategies for picking the right sunscreen and cover-ups for your brood, and enjoy more family fun in the sun this summer.

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THE BEST WAY TO KEEP EVERYONE PROTECTED FROM SUN DAMAGE is simple: Stay covered up and stick to the shade. That sounds like an easy enough plan, until you consider the melting temperatures and imagine imprisoning your kids under sun umbrellas when all they really want to do is swim, run and play. It's just not practical to preach total sun-avoidance, so we've got some smart strategies for keeping your family shielded from UV damage while they catch some rays this summer. ►

SPECIAL THANKS TO
THE CHILDREN'S PLACE,
GAP, LANDS' END,
UV SKINZ AND
HOME DEPOT

COVERING UP

Although any tightly woven fabric, like denim or heavy cotton, will block out damaging ultraviolet rays, they may not be as comfy in the heat as specially designed UV-resistant fabrics, which are lighter and cooler. Long-sleeved shirts are ideal beach cover-ups for kids. Hats with a wide brim will help to protect the face, neck and scalp, which is also susceptible to burns, says Cheryl Rosen, national director of the Canadian Dermatology Association's sun awareness program.

When it comes to seeking shade, find seating under a tree during a trip to the park, or sun shelter at sporting events. And get in the habit of bringing a sun umbrella with you on family outings. "Sometimes you have to bring your own shade," says Rosen.

THE FACE

Even serious shade-worshippers can't get away without sunscreen. "It really is necessary every single day – even if you're not spending the entire day outside," says Charmaine Cooper, a certified skin therapist at the International Dermal Institute in Toronto. You may not get a sunburn from a lunch-hour stroll or from sitting next to a window, but the damage caused by these incidental bouts of UV exposure do add up. Skin cancer, DNA damage (which can cause skin irregularities, as well as premature signs of aging, including wrinkles), and even immune-suppression issues, can all be attributed to the cumulative effects of UV exposure over time, says Rosen. The key is to think beyond associating sunscreen with the beach. "You really have to think of it as daylight exposure, not sun exposure," says Cooper.

Faces and hands are most susceptible to long-term damage because they receive daily doses of UV. Protect the whole family by making morning applications of sunscreen a habit.

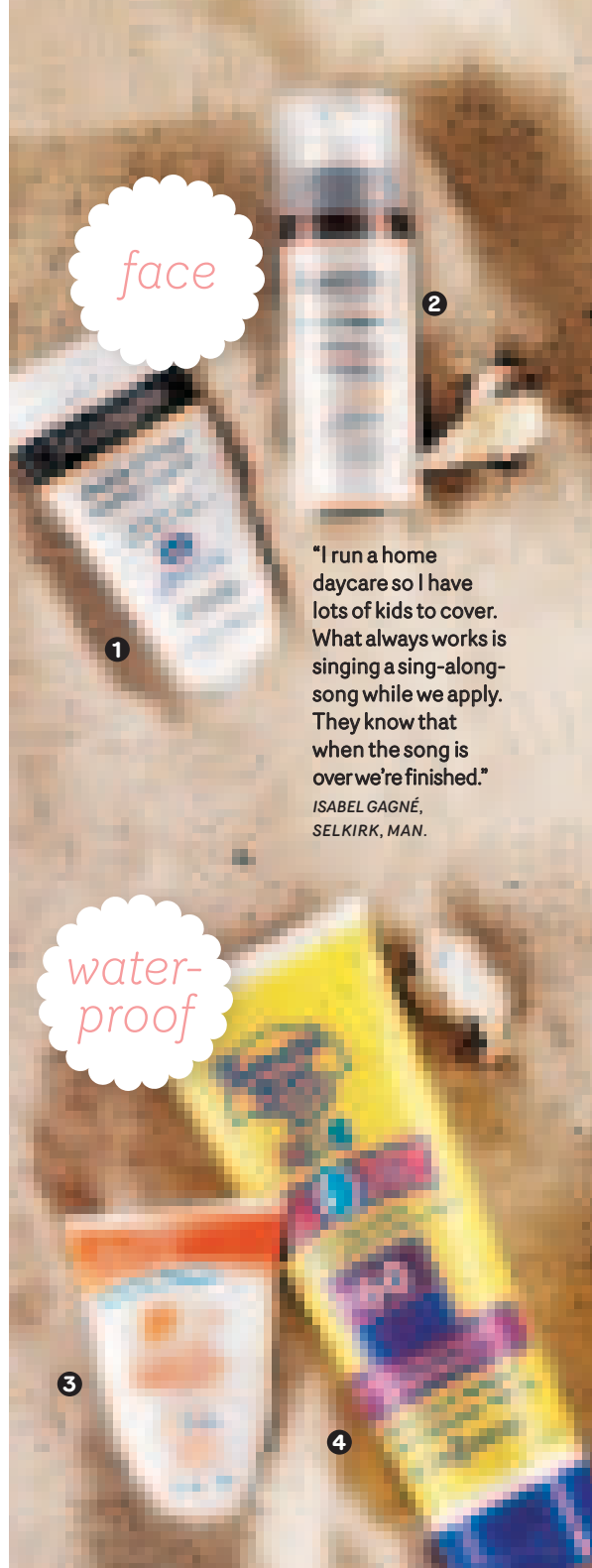
THE BODY

Shield your whole body, from head to toe, by applying sunscreen to exposed

skin at least every three hours. "To be safe, I'd suggest every one to two hours, especially for kids," says Cooper. That means smoothing a sunscreen (sprays should be rubbed in, too, for even coverage) over all exposed areas, being sure to go well under the seams of bathing suits and shirt collars to allow for movement. And don't forget the nooks and crannies. "The tops of the ears and feet, and back of the neck are three commonly overlooked spots where people experience burns and where we see the most incidences of skin cancer," says Cooper.

Be sure to use an SPF of at least 30 on the whole family for maximum protection. (There's still a lot of debate about the effectiveness of higher SPF numbers so use with care: Double the number doesn't necessarily mean double the protection, so don't skip applications because you've got a bottle that says SPF 60 or higher.) And for the most part, you can use the same products on the whole family. "Ones that say they're for kids tend to be more gentle and tear-proof, but otherwise they're not all that different from the regular formulations," says Rosen. If your kids are a bit older and don't have especially sensitive skin, you can use the regular stuff on them, too. Note: It's safe to apply sunscreen to babies six months and older, but before that they should be kept shaded at all times.

Think you've got the sunblock routine down pat? You could still be missing a key step. Benjamin Barankin, a dermatologist and medical director of the Toronto Dermatology Centre, says most people make one crucial mistake: They only use half as much product as they should. To ensure kids are getting optimal coverage, thoroughly coat all exposed skin, "then apply it again," he says. Thorough and frequent applications are essential for sweat- and water-resistant products, too. "It's important to realize that these lotions and sprays aren't actually waterproof," says Rosen. You need to reapply after every dip in the pool and about every hour while playing sweaty sports like soccer or volleyball. ☒



"I run a home daycare so I have lots of kids to cover. What always works is singing a sing-along-song while we apply. They know that when the song is over we're finished."

ISABEL GAGNÉ,
SELKIRK, MAN.

face

1. NEUTROGENA PURE & FREE SENSITIVE SUNSCREEN LOTIONS SPF 50, \$16

2. AVEENO ACTIVE NATURALS POSITIVELY AGELESS TINTED MOISTURIZER SPF 30, \$28

TIP: Apply sunblock over your moisturizer and under your makeup, or use a three-in-one product like this one.

waterproof

3. GREEN BEAVER KIDS SUNSCREEN SPF 30, \$22, GREENBEAVER.COM

TIP: This one contains natural ingredients and is certified organic.

4. BANANA BOAT KIDS TEAR FREE SUNSCREEN LOTION SPF 60, \$12

