

## Message from the Parish Nurses

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### IS SUNSCREEN SAFE?

**Sunscreen has been in the news a lot lately. This news has some people wondering whether sunscreen is safe, especially considering the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) announcement that it will update regulatory requirements for most sunscreen products sold in the United States. Learn more about why and how the FDA is proposing to update the requirements for sunscreens.**

Sun safety is always in season and it's important to protect your skin from sun damage throughout the year, no matter the weather. Exposure to sun can cause sunburn, skin aging (such as skin spots, wrinkles, or "leathery skin"), eye damage, and skin cancer. Skin cancer incidence rates continue to rise, making risk from excess sun exposure an important public health priority.

A report "Shedding New Light on Sunscreen Absorption" in the May 6, 2019, Journal of the American Medical Association describes the results of an exploratory maximal usage trial (MUsT) evaluating the systemic absorption (through the skin and into the body) of sunscreen active ingredients. A MUsT study evaluates the systemic absorption of a topical drug (i.e., one applied to the skin) when used according to the maximum limits of the product's directions for use. The scientists from the FDA studied the effects of sunscreen on 24 healthy people. They tested four sunscreens – two sprays, one lotion, and one cream – each applied four times a day, to 75% of the body surface, for four days. Blood samples were then taken from the participants to determine how much of the four specific sunscreen ingredients ended up in the bloodstreams. The FDA recommends that any ingredients in sunscreen with systemic absorption greater than 0.5 ng/ml (nanograms per milliliter) should undergo toxicology studies, including research on developmental, reproductive, and cancer-related health issues. All four of the ingredients were found at levels greater than the FDA benchmark. However, without further testing, FDA does not know what levels of absorption can be considered safe.

### WHAT'S THE NEXT FDA STEP?

What the FDA has done is issued a proposed rule to update regulatory requirements for most sunscreen products in the United States, where sunscreens are

regulated as drugs. As part of this rule, the FDA is asking manufacturers and other interested parties for additional safety data on 12 active sunscreen ingredients currently available in marketed products. The key data gap for each of these 12 active sunscreen ingredients is understanding whether, and to what extent, the ingredient is absorbed into the body after topical application. These 12 ingredients are:

- **Ingredients commonly used in the U.S.:** ensulizole, octisalate, homosalate, octocrylene, octinoxate, oxybenzone, avobenzone.
- **Ingredients not frequently used in the U. S.:** cinoxate, dioxybenzone, meradimate, padimate O, sulisobenzene.

### OTHER SUNSCREEN INGREDIENTS

The FDA is proposing that two ingredients are "generally recognized as safe and effective" (GRACE). These ingredients are:

- Titanium dioxide
- Zinc oxide

The FDA proposes that two other ingredients are **not** GRACE. These ingredients are:

- PABA (Para-aminobenzoic acid)
- Tolamine salicylate

You won't find either of these ingredients in sunscreen legally sold in the United States.

### SHOULD I CONTINUE TO USE SUNSCREEN?

**Yes**, sunscreen is safe to use. American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommend it. Scientific studies support using it on a regular basis to protect against skin cancer. The FDA continues to tell Americans that they should apply sunscreen.

After announcing that it's asking for more information about sunscreen ingredients, the FDA added the following statement to its website:

**"Given the recognized public health benefits of sunscreen use, Americans should continue to use sunscreen and other sun protective measures as this important rulemaking effort moves forward."**

By Barbara Mueller, RN, Faith Community Nurse  
More information can be found at:

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates>

In search type: sunscreen – choose: "Shedding New Light on Sunscreen Absorption" and "Tips to Stay Safe in the Sun".

<https://www.aad.org/public/spot-skin-cancer> In search type: "Is Sunscreen Safe?"

**Visit:** [www.StAgnesSheperdstown.org](http://www.StAgnesSheperdstown.org) for "**SUN SAFETY TIPS and THE 7 BEST SUNSCREEN FOR KIDS OF 2019**". **Click on:** Parish Health Newsletter

## SUN SAFETY TIPS

Spending time outdoors is a common activity in the summer, but remember to protect against the sun's rays. Everyone is at risk for sunburn. Children especially need to be protected from the sun's burning rays, since most sun damage occurs in childhood.

### SUN SAFETY FOR BABIES UNDER SIX MONTHS

- Babies under 6 months of age should be kept out of direct sunlight. Move your baby to the shade under a tree, umbrella, or stroller canopy. Dress babies in lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs and use brimmed hats that shade the neck to prevent sunburn.
- When adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen with at least 15 SPF (sun protection factor) on infants under 6 months to a small area, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands. Remember it takes 30 minutes to be effective.
- If an infant gets sunburn, apply cool compresses to the affected area.

### SUN SAFETY FOR KIDS

- The first, and best, line of defense against harmful ultraviolet radiation (UVR) exposure is covering up. Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during peak intensity hours – between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Select clothes made of tightly woven fabrics, Cotton clothing is both cool and protective.
- Try to find a wide-brimmed hat that can shade the cheeks, chin, ears, and neck. Sunglasses with ultraviolet (UV) protection are also a good idea for protecting your child's eyes.
- Apply sunscreen with an SPF 15 or greater to areas of your child's skin that aren't covered by clothing. Before applying, test the sunscreen on your child's back for an allergic reaction. Apply carefully around the eyes, avoiding eyelids. If a rash develops, talk with your pediatrician.
- Be sure to apply enough sunscreen – about one ounce per sitting for a young adult.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.
- If your child gets sunburn that results in blistering, pain or fever, contact your pediatrician.

**Source:** American Academy of Pediatrics

More information can be found at: <https://www.aap.org>  
In search type: "Sun Safety and Protection Tips" from the American Academy of Pediatrics

## THE 7 BEST SUNSCREENS FOR KIDS OF 2019

Protect your little ones from the summer rays.

- **Best Overall:** Blue Lizard Baby Sunscreen – SPF 30  
"It contains no fragrance and no parabens, so it's good for sensitive skin. The mineral-based formula is water-resistant for about 40 minutes" Buy at Amazon or Target
- **Best Budget:** Aveeno Baby Continuous Protection Zinc Oxide Mineral Sunscreen - SPF 50  
"Protection is sweat and water-resistant for up to 80 minutes." Buy at Amazon, Target, and Walmart
- **Best Natural:** Adorable Baby By Loving Naturals All Natural Sunscreen - SPF 30  
"The formula contains zinc oxide, grapeseed oil, sunflower oil, and other all-natural ingredients so you know what is in the sunblock." Buy at Amazon
- **Best Spray:** Kiss My Face Sun Spray Sunscreen Lotion – SPF 30  
"Features a pump spray (not aerosol) that sprays on a nice layer, it's fragrance-free, and doesn't contain any gluten, phthalates, or parabens." Buy at Amazon
- **Best Sensitive Skin:** Thinkbaby Safe Sunscreen -SPF 50  
"Has a fresh papaya scent that doesn't smell like typical sunscreen. The formula is mineral-based and is water-resistant for up to 80 minutes." Buy at Amazon, Target or Walmart
- **Best Lotion:** Badger Kids Sunscreen – SPF 30  
"It contains sunflower oil, beeswax, and vitamin E to help keep skin feeling soft. Notes of tangerine and vanilla add a fun fruity scent to this sunscreen as well. Buy at Amazon
- **Best Stick:** Neutrogena Wet Skin Kids Water Resistant Sunscreen Stick – SPF 70  
"It's perfect for getting sun protection onto little noses, cheeks and anywhere else you want a precise application. Buy at Amazon, Target or Walmart

By Barbara Mueller, RN, Faith Community Nurse

More information can be found at:

<https://www.verywellfamily.com>

In how can we help you? Type:

"The 7 Best Sunscreens for Kids of 2019" and "Baby Sunscreen and Sun Safety Tips" (they also have another list of Kid-Friendly Sunscreen and Sunblock).

**Note: Remember to read all ingredients on the sunscreens before making your decision on which sunscreen to use on your children. Some do contain ingredients that is being tested by the FDA. You need to choose the one that you feel comfortable using on your children and yourself. Adults can also use a children sunscreen.**