

2007 YOUth Health Bulletin

Cooperative Extension Service

This publication compiled and edited by the H.E.E.L. Program
(Health Education through Extension Leadership) Staff

Stay Safe in the Sun

May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month. Learning about sun safety is an important step in preventing skin cancer. Summer is coming and school will soon be out. You will be spending more time outdoors playing and enjoying the sun. Taking the time to learn sun safety can prevent you from getting a painful sunburn and possibly developing skin cancer.

Skin cancer is the abnormal growth of skin cells. It is the most common form of cancer in people. The most common cause of skin cancer is getting too much sun. Ultraviolet (UV) rays are made by the sun. There are 3 types of UV rays: UVA, UVB, and UVC. UVB rays are the sun rays that make a sunburn. A sunburn damages the skin cells. Years of constant damage to the skin can lead to abnormal cell changes. These abnormal cells can result in cancer.

Staying safe means learning 3 important words: avoid, protect, and apply.

Avoid

.....the sun during the hours of 10 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The sun's rays are strongest during those hours. Either play in the shade with proper sun protection or do an indoor activity with your parents or caregivers.

.....tanning beds and sun lamps. Tanning beds and sun lamps contain very high levels of UV rays.

Watch your local news or visit the National Weather Service website at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/> to learn what the UV index is for your area. Do not go outside when the UV index is high. The UV index measures the strength of the sun and will show how high the risk for getting a sunburn; the higher the number the greater the risk.

Protect

.....your eyes by wearing protective sunglasses, your face and neck by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, and your arms and legs by covering those areas with lightweight clothing.

Wear protective gear even if you are outdoors on a cloudy day. Even on cloudy days the sun's rays can cause a sunburn.

Apply

.....sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. The higher the SPF the lower the risk of getting a sunburn.

.....sunscreen even if you plan on getting into water. Reapply the sunscreen after being in water or sweating, even if the sunscreen is water and sweat proof.

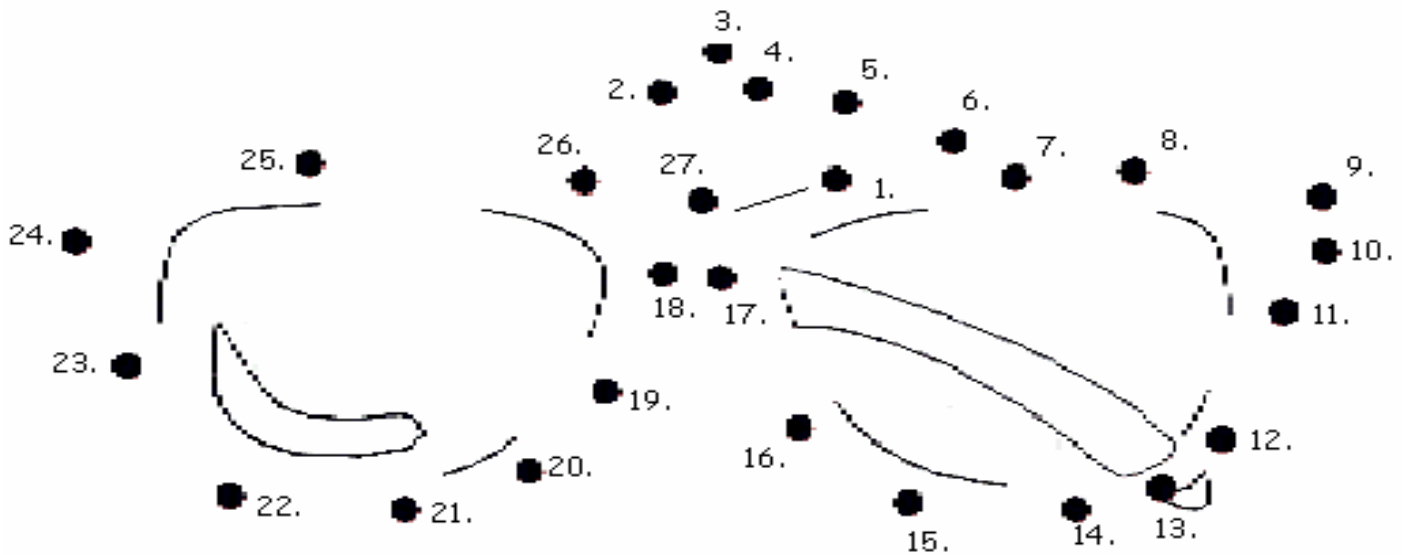
Wearing sunscreen does not mean you can stay in the sun all day. You still need to avoid peak sun times.

Teach your parents these important rules to keep them safe this coming summer and future summers.

Visit <http://www.wpa.gov/sunwise/kids.html> for fun and interactive games about sun safety.

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Take the true or false sun safety test.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. You cannot get sunburn if it is cloudy outside. | True or False |
| 2. I do not need to wear sunscreen if I am in the water. | True or False |
| 3. If I wear a sunscreen I can stay outdoors as long as I want. | True or False |
| 4. A tanning bed is safer than being outdoors in the sun. | True or False |
| 5. There are no special times to avoid the sun. | True or False |



Answers appear at bottom of page.

For more information on health issues in
Kentucky, please visit: www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL

Sources:

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Answers: All are false.

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