

# Sun Quiz Question & Answers

**1. I can't get skin cancer, because my routine (work, drive to work, indoor hobbies, and vacations) doesn't include any outdoor activities.**

The correct answer is **false**.

Dermatologists say brief sun exposures all year round can add up to major damage for people with fair skin. And the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays do pass through car windows, so driving during peak sun hours, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., to lunch or on weekends, bathes your hands and arms in damaging UV rays. When added up, everyday exposures are linked to squamous cell cancer. Although not as dangerous as melanoma, squamous cell cancer is far more common and the number of cases has been going up every year.

**2. My husband should use sunscreen at football games, even though he only goes (and gets a burn!) once or twice a year.**

The correct answer is **true**.

Many people think it's OK to get a sunburn now and then, but studies show that even occasional exposure to strong sunlight seems to increase the risk of the most serious type of skin cancer, melanoma.

**3. If I'm wearing sunscreen, I can stay in the sun as long as I want.**

The correct answer is **false**.

It's not smart to broil in the sun for several hours, even if you are wearing sunscreen. These products don't provide total protection from ultraviolet (UV) rays. The American Cancer Society recommends that people **seek shade** and **limit time in the sun at midday**. Also, **cover up** with a shirt, wear a wide-brimmed hat, use a sunscreen rated SPF 15 or higher, and reapply it about every 2 hours. And don't forget **sunglasses** for eye protection.

**4. A sunscreen labeled SPF 30 blocks twice as much UV radiation as one labeled SPF 15.**

The correct answer is **false**.

The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) describes how long a product will protect your skin, if you apply the sunscreen correctly. Fair-skinned people begin to burn in about 15 minutes on a sunny day, so wearing an SPF 15 sunscreen (if applied and reapplied properly) would prevent sunburn for about 225 minutes (15 SPF x 15 minutes until sun burn = 225), or 3 hours and 45 minutes. The SPF 30 sunscreen should last for 450 minutes (30 x 15 = 450), or 7 hours and 30 minutes. In practical use, you'll need to reapply sunscreen every 2 hours. Be sure to choose a broad spectrum product that blocks UVB and UVA light and use a lot.

**5. It's safe to let my children stay in the pool all day if they slip on a T-shirt after a couple hours and reapply sunscreen to their faces, arms, and legs.**

The correct answer is **false**.

UV rays easily go through a white cotton T-shirt, especially if it's wet. Your children will get only about as much protection as an SPF 4 sunscreen—certainly not enough for all day and well below the minimum of SPF 15 recommended by the ACS. Better clothing choices include dark colors, fabrics with tight weaves, and specially treated garments and bathing suits. Sun-protective clothing is often found at sporting goods stores. Another good choice is moving into the shade.

For babies younger than 6 months, shade, sun-protective clothing, and hats are best. As a last resort, pediatricians now say that very small amounts of sunscreen can be used on small areas, such as the face and back of the hands.

**6. How often do you need to reapply water-resistant sunscreen?  
every 2 hours or sooner  
after sweating or swimming  
after you towel dry  
all of the above**

The correct answer is **all of the above**.

For best results, most sunscreens need to be reapplied about every 2 hours or sooner, but be sure to check the label. Sunscreens labeled "water resistant" are made to protect you when swimming or sweating, but may only last for 40 minutes. Also, remember that sunscreen usually rubs off when you towel dry.

**7. Getting a "base tan" at an indoor tanning salon is as good way to prevent sunburn when I go to the beach later this summer.**

The correct answer is **false**.

Our experts say a "base tan" gives you very little protection against sunburn. And that goes for indoor tans, too, which provide a sun protective factor of about 4, much less than most sunscreens. A base tan may, if fact, increase the chance you'll get a burn, because you're likely to stay out longer without properly protecting your skin.

Also, tanning itself injures the skin. What you don't see is UV damage to deeper layers, where it builds-up from every tan and burn you've ever had. There really is no such thing as a "safe tan."

**8. What are the two most common (and painful!) sunscreen mistakes?**

**choosing an SPF below 15 and missing spots  
using too little and waiting too long to reapply**

The correct answer is **using too little and waiting too long to reapply**.

About 1 ounce of sunscreen (a "palmful") should be used to cover the arms, legs, neck and face of the average adult. For best results, most sunscreens must be reapplied at least every 2 hours and even more often if you are swimming or sweating. Products labeled "waterproof" may provide protection for at least 80 minutes even when you are swimming or sweating. Products that are "water resistant" may provide protection for only 40 minutes. To be safe use a lot of sunscreen and use it often.

**9. Now put it all together. You applied sunscreen at 12:00 noon for an afternoon of reading beside the pool. At 2:00 p.m., which one of the following actions would best protect your skin?**

**slip on a long cotton sundress  
move to the shade  
reapply sunscreen**

The correct answer is **move to the shade**.

While all 3 actions help, getting out of the mid-day sun is the best choice in this situation. **Seeking shade** is a key element in preventing skin cancer, especially between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

The sundress blocks very little UV radiation because it's made of cotton. It compares to a sunscreen rated SPF 4. **Covering up** is the right idea, but dark colors, tight weaves, and clothing labeled at least UPF 30 work better.

Sunscreen should not be used to extend your time in intense sunlight. It's an important part of a larger strategy that the American Cancer Society recommends to protect your skin, but it does not provide total protection. To get the most from **sunscreen**, choose products of SPF 15 or higher that block both UVA and UVB rays, reapply at least every 2 hours, and use at least 1 ounce or a palmful for an adult