

## Health Info to know with Dr. Joe

Expert advice with Head and Neck surgeon and University of Florida Associate Professor, Dr. Joe Parell.

Dr. Parell is board certified in Otolaryngology and board certified in Facial Plastic Surgery.

Q: I recently saw a report that most sunscreens don't work as well as their makers advertise. Which sunscreens actually do work?

A: Unfortunately, the only ideal sunscreen is sun block (the not-so-discreet white zinc oxide you might find on a lifeguard's nose). Traditional sunscreens do a pretty good job

of protecting us from UVB, the spectrum of electromagnetic energy that causes sunburn. However, a blocking agent offers the strongest protection from UVA, the spectrum of radiation that causes wrinkling, age spots and skin cancer.

If you prefer to avoid the lifeguard look, buy sunscreens that contain zinc, titanium, or avobenzone. These offer a higher level of protection and leave the skin looking slightly pale, rather than opaque white. Remember, if you are going out in a bathing suit, be sure to reapply sunscreen every hour and after each swim. Neutrogena products with helioplex are a reasonable choice.

In the end, the only truly effective way to prevent sun damage is to cover up. A wide brimmed hat and light long sleeved shirts and pants, such as those offered for fisherman, will offer the best protection. Wearing these types of lighter fabrics will keep you protected without making you extremely hot. Remember, the sun's rays contain nuclear energy, just like a nuclear bomb. The only difference is the lower level of intensity, but the sun's energy is still harmful.

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