



Sunscreen Season Begins

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From CNN Senior Medical Correspondent Elizabeth Cohen and CNN Producer Sabriya Rice

Memorial Day is the official start of summer, and so the official start of sunscreen season. A trip to the sunscreen aisle of your drug store can be bamboozling – there are so many products out there it can be difficult to choose. So here are the basics of buying a sunscreen to protect your skin this summer.

What SPF should I buy?: SPF 30 works just fine, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. SPF 30 sunscreens let in 3% of harmful rays. A sunscreen with an 85 SPF lets in 1% of harmful rays. The difference doesn't matter, according to dermatologists. "There are diminishing returns at the higher numbers," says Dr. Amy Derick, a spokeswoman for the AAD.

What else should I look for on the label? Make sure your sunscreen blocks both UVA and UVB rays. Some products don't block UVA rays, which can cause wrinkles and age spots.

How much should I put on? Don't be skimpy on the sunscreen. Use an ounce to cover your body – that's enough to fill a shot glass. Re-apply every hour, or more frequently if you've been swimming.

What brand should I buy? According to the Environmental Working Group, some brands are better than others. See their report at <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/splash.php?URI=%2Fspecial%2Fsunscreens2008%2Fsummary.php>

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