



LINCOLN PARK
INSTITUTE
FOR ORAL, FACIAL AND COSMETIC SURGERY

Sunscreens and Lipblocks

Protecting your skin from sun damage

With summer finally upon us, it is a good time to discuss the importance of protecting your skin from sun damage. Sun damage occurs throughout the entire year, not just during the summer months. Efforts should be made to help minimize the risks of sun exposure everyday.

Why should I wear sunscreens?

Once thought to be a sign of beauty, we now know that a tan is not healthy. Over exposure to the sun can lead to **skin cancers**. **Melanoma**, in particular, can be a deadly form of skin cancer. Studies show that most sun damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. The cumulative exposure over the years, plus the number of blistering burns experienced can increase the chances of developing melanoma. The sun's rays also breakdown the collagen and elastic tissue of the skin, causing **wrinkles** and **photo aging**. Unsightly dark spots, called lentigines, can also occur due to sun exposure.

How can I prevent sun damage?

The use of sunscreens and lipblocks should be a year round ritual. They should be used each time you go outdoors, even if it is just to mow the lawn or drive to the store. Sunscreens are labeled with an "**SPF**" or **Sunburn Protection Factor**. This number relates to the sunscreen's ability to screen the **UVB**, or **burning**, rays. There are also **UVA**, or **aging**, rays which can come through window glass or clouds. These are also harmful to the skin, cause wrinkles, and cause brown spots. The best protection is with a physical blocker like titanium dioxide or zinc oxide along with a chemical screen. Some sunscreens also contain avobenzone or helioplex which provides some UVA protection. A SPF of 30 or higher is recommended.

Other methods to prevent sun damage include:

- Avoid peak hours of sun intensity between 10 am and 3pm.
- Use protective clothing such as long sleeves, pants, and a wide brimmed hat.
- Apply sunscreen and lipblock to all exposed surfaces **20-30 minutes prior** to going outdoors. This allows them to bind to the skin and increase their effectiveness. You need one ounce to cover an adult body.
- Choose a sunscreen that is waterproof or water resistant if you are exercising and sweating outdoors.
- Reapply sunscreen at least **every 1-2 hours** as sunscreen will wash off or sweat off and lose its effectiveness (even waterproof).
- If wearing makeup, apply sunscreen first and then the makeup over it.

Some of the sun's rays will still make it through to the skin. Following these instructions will maximize sun protection and the effectiveness of the sunscreens you use. Although protecting your skin now will not reverse the sun damage that has accumulated over the years, it will go far to minimize any additional damage you might receive.

LPI was established in 1997 and is located in a beautifully renovated, 6,000-square-foot, circa 1880s building. It was the first oral and maxillofacial surgery practice in Chicago to be accredited under JCAHO's office-base surgery accreditation program. LPI is also home to Chicago's first i-CAT[®] Cone Beam 3-D Imaging System. It's available to other practices as a standalone offering. In addition to LPI's

full array of oral and maxillofacial services, they also offer a wide variety of surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures.

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