

Here Comes the Sun

Stay Sun Safe

By Daniel Belkin, M.D.

As we look forward to summer and fun in the sun, it's important to remember how to be sun safe. Good sun habits can prevent a vacation-ruining sunburn and also keep your skin and your kids' skin healthy, younger and cancer-free. Non-melanoma skin cancer is probably due to cumulative sun exposure over one's life, so it is never too early to start some of these protective measures.

Indoor Precautions

The first thing to remember is that the strong summer sun can get to us even indoors, so summer sun protection should continue even on non-beach days. Most people have more sun damage and skin cancer on their left side due to driving (in the United States – in Australia, they have more on their right!). While a car's windshield protects from all ultraviolet (UV) rays coming through including UVA and UVB, the side and back windows allow UVA to pass through.

Standard windows at home and in the office are similar. In the summer months, it is important to remember that strong sun can be reaching you through the windows of your car or home, even when you are spending the day indoors. It is also reaching your baby or young child sitting in the back seat of your car. UV-filtering window film is available for the side and back windows for those who wish for some added protection. They can be transparent or tinted (make sure the tint is not darker than your state allows).

Sunscreen, Clothing and Lip Balm

Whether indoors or out, a daily "broad spectrum" sunscreen that covers both UVA and UVB and that is SPF 30 or higher is a good way to keep UV rays away. Mineral blockers (look for zinc or titanium in the active ingredients) are good ways to ensure you are getting broad-spectrum coverage. It also ensures you are not going to have stinging or hypersensitivity, which is more common with chemical-based blockers. Mineral-based sunscreens are also great and safe for babies and kids.

Sun protective clothing can be comfortable and light-weight and is another option for covering up in the car or outside. Look for companies where the fabric has its



own inherent SPF. Don't forget the lips – look for SPF 30 lip balm..

Hat and Sunglasses

When outside, in addition to sunscreen or sun protective clothing, protect your face and eyes with a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses. A wide-brimmed hat is best, so if wearing a baseball cap remember it leaves a lot of your neck, face, and ears unprotected.

Seek shade when possible. The sun is strongest between about 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and the American Academy of Dermatology recommends seeking shade, "if your shadow is shorter than you are." At the beach or pool, there are a few other important things to remember. Water and sand reflect UV rays and increase your chance of a burn even from below. The most important thing here is to be good about reapplying sunscreen even if your kids resist you. The general rule of thumb is every two hours but it may need to be more often as it gets washed away with water and sweat.

Take Extra Care

Adults who struggle with melisma (tan to brown discoloration that can occur on the cheeks, forehead, and upper lip), need to be extra careful with sun in the summer months. Even a few minutes of unprotected sun exposure, such as when walking from the house to the car, could jumpstart your pigment cells. For some added protection, extract of the fern called polypodium leucotomos can be purchased over-the-counter in a pill form (brand name Heliocare). Due to its antioxidant properties it slightly raises one's "natural SPF." Check with your doctor before taking this medicine.

The summer is a great time to have fun with your family. But getting into sun safe habits for you and your kids pays off!

Daniel Belkin, M.D. is a board-certified dermatologist and fellowship-trained Mohs surgeon at the Laser & Skin Surgery Center of New York in Manhattan.

our living room into a preschool for AJ, complete with a therapy swing hanging from the ceiling. We had a group of nine therapists who were in our house seven days a week. AJ's therapy schedule became a full-time job. One therapist would let herself out and the other would arrive.

This continued for several years, and we saw growth in areas and stagnation in others. With a lot of blood, sweat and tears, we began to see AJ start to stack rings, to occasionally respond to his name, and he started to smile and giggle more often. But there was always one major thing missing – his voice.

And Even More

At the age of 4, we decided we needed to make another change to help get AJ to the next level. We enrolled him in full-time preschool at the Fred S. Keller School. In that environment, we saw even more progress, but still not speech. It was around that time that we met a wonderful woman who is still with AJ today. His speech therapist, Jennifer DeMatteis, took one look at AJ and realized that he wasn't speaking because he also has apraxia, a speech disorder that commonly affects those with autism.

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AUTISM SPEAKS WALK: YOU CAN HELP

Sarah and her family are among hundreds of families, friends and neighbors who come together at Autism Speaks Walks to support children, teens and adults with autism. This community event provides an opportunity for families to connect with others affected by autism. There are also information tables for those who simply want to learn more about autism, its impact and how they can help.

The Autism Speaks Walk Westchester/
Fairfield 2017

New York Presbyterian Hospital,
Westchester Division

June 4, 2017

Registration 9 a.m. The opening ceremony
and walk 10 a.m.

Register: AutismSpeaksWalk.org.

This finding helped us better understand what AJ needed. Today, he is in third grade at a specialized school for autism. He is still non-verbal, but can functionally communicate through an iPad. He is making incredible gains, and our hope is that he can one day join his brother, Holden, in public school.

We have now settled into our life with AJ and his autism. He is happy, loving and has an incredible support system. As a parent, it took me a bit longer to accept the reality. I have now come to realize that AJ is who he was meant to be. Each year, we look forward to our chance to support AJ and others like him through the Autism Speaks Walk. It reminds us not to look at the things AJ cannot do, but rather celebrate his personal milestones one step at a time.

Sarah Kooluris is a stay at home mom of two boys, AJ, age 7 and Holden, age 6. Sarah serves as PTO President at AJ's school, Devereux. She has co-chaired the Westchester Fairfield Autism Speaks Walk in 2014 and 2015. Since starting to walk with Autism Speaks, her team has raised more than \$130,000. The Kooluris family lives in Pleasantville, NY.

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Not invited, *again?*

While it may not be a big deal if your child doesn't get invited once, it is a big deal if it happens repeatedly. Friends get invited. So, if your child isn't being invited to birthday parties and other events, that is a very good indication that he, or she, is struggling socially. The good news is that you can help!

***For free information, tips, and strategies to help your child make friends and keep them go to: WhereICanBeMe.com*