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**HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD PUT SUNSCREEN, SHIRTS, AND SHADE IN THE SAME
NON-NEGOTIABLE CATEGORY AS CAR SEATS, TOOTHBRUSHING, AND BIKE HELMETS.**

You probably think you're on the ball when it comes to sun safety: You always put sunscreen on your kids, and they rarely, if ever, come home looking like a lobster. However, new research has found that overall sun exposure in childhood— not just burns—significantly increases the risk of skin cancer. "Young, developing skin may be particularly vulnerable to UV rays," says Parents advisor Lawrence Eichenfeld, chief of pediatric and adolescent dermatology at Rady Children's Hospital, in San Diego. If your child is getting intense sun exposure playing outdoors, she's in danger of developing melanoma—the most serious type of skin cancer—even if she has what appears to be a healthy tan." Childhood melanoma is rare—most cases don't show up until adulthood—but the number of kids diagnosed has been increasing almost 3 percent every year.

If all this news makes you want to gn irour k idt 3

EXPOSED! THE 5 MOST COMMON SUN MYTHS

MYTH My child won't get burned if she's wearing SPF 50.

TRUTH If you don't apply enough or if you don't reapply it—your child can still get burned. says Ann Haas, M.D., chair of the AAD's Youth Education Committee. The rule of thumb is to apply at least an ounce of sunscreen over your child's entire body: with spray sunscreens, make sure you saturate all of your child's skin.



You also need to put more product on your child every two hours and after she swims or sweats a lot. "The term 'waterproof' is misleading—all it means is that the sunscreen protects you for up to 80 minutes in the water," says Elizabeth McBurney, M.D., clinical professor of dermatology at Tulane University School of Medicine, in New Orleans. "But some will still wash off in the water and be rubbed off when your child dries off with a towel."

MYTH Getting a tan isn't dangerous.

REALITY Sunburns definitely increase the risk of developing melanoma, but your kids are still at risk of getting skin cancer even if they always get a golden tan. "We know now that the more sun your child gets, the more likely he or she is to develop basal-cell and squamous-cell skin cancers," says Dr. Eichenfeld. "Any sign of color means that the skin has been damaged."

MYTH My child is inside for most of the day, so I don't have to worry.

TRUTH You may have to, especially on sunny days. Window glass only filters out UVB, so UVA can still penetrate your child's skin if she's standing nearby. "We used to think that only UVB rays were dangerous, but now we know that UVA rays also cause skin cancer," says Parents advisor Jody Alpert Levine, M.D., a pediatric dermatologist in New York City. When you're going on a long car ride, put sunscreen on your child's hands, forearms, and face before hitting the road. If her play area or desk is right near a window at home or at school, she should also wear sunscreen to reduce exposure.

MYTH My baby shouldn't wear sunscreen.

TRUTH You should keep your baby out of the sun, but there may be times when you can't avoid exposing her. The American Academy of Pediatrics says it's safe to use a small amount of sunscreen on an infant, but you should do a "patch test" the day before by putting a little on the inside of her wrist to check for irritation or allergies.

MYTH My child has to spend some time without sunscreen so he doesn't develop vitamin D deficiency.

TRUTH You've probably seen news reports about how we all need sunshine to help our bodies make this important nutrient. However, the AAD says that both kids and adults can get enough vitamin D through day-to-day sun exposure, multivitamins, and foods like milk and fortified orange juice. "Any healthy, active child who spends time playing outdoors is going to get more than enough sunlight for adequate vitamin D production," says Sandra Johnson, M.D., assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, in Little Rock. "Studies have also shown that people who wear sunscreen regularly don't suffer from vitamin D deficiency."

