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## Is There Such A Thing As A Safe Tan?

A tan is a sign of injury. It is the body's attempt to increase sun protection after the skin is already permanently damaged by an overdose of ultraviolet radiation! Eighty percent of the visible signs of aging are due to sun exposure. And that means all sun exposure, including a quick walk to the mail box or sitting by the window in the car. Unprotected exposure to the sun is like sitting in a time machine on fast-forward. Using the appropriate SPF and applying it liberally is very important.

### What does SPF mean?

Sun protection factor refers to the FDA approved techniques to assess the efficacy of a sunscreen in ultraviolet B (UVB) burning ray protection. An SPF rating does not measure ultraviolet A (UVA-aging ray) protection. A broad spectrum sunscreen is required to give protection from UV rays. The SPF number gives you some idea of how long you can stay in the sun without burning. For example if you normally burn in 10 minutes without sunscreen and you have applied a generous dose of sunscreen with an SPF 15, you should be protected from sunburn for 150 minutes. Always reapply after exercising or swimming and remember to protect your eyesight by wearing protective eyewear.

If the sunscreen is labeled as "water resistant," it means that same sunscreen still tests at the same SPF after application, followed by the subject being submerged in moving water for four 20-minute immersions. Mineral powders with a "very water resistant" rating, achieving the highest nomenclature permitted by the FDA, have titanium dioxide and zinc oxide ingredients in the powder bases, which literally block UV rays by acting like tiny mirrors on the skin, reflecting, refracting and absorbing rays. ■

Article by Belle Santé