WESTLAKE
DERMATOLOGY
& Cosmetic Surgery

Sun Protection

Methods for Sun Protection

1) The preferred choice of protection from the sun is to avoid going in the sun.
2) The next best choice for sun protection is to wear protective clothing. This includes wearing a broad-rimmed hat, long sleeves, high collars and tightly-woven clothing.
3) When the above options are not possible or for areas not covered by clothing, a broad spectrum (SPF 30 or higher) sunblock should be used (see below).

About Ultraviolet Wavelengths

1) The ultraviolet B (burning) wavelengths of sunlight are most intense during the non-winter seasons. In southern climates (such as Austin) it is present year-round. Mid-day sun (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.) provides the most intensity.
2) The ultraviolet A wavelengths of sunlight are present year-round, from dawn to dusk and will pass through window glass unabated. This type of ultraviolet is the form seen in tanning beds. It will accentuate sunburns and produces most of the deeper sunlight-induced aging changes because it passes much deeper into the skin than ultraviolet B.

About Sunblock

1) Sunblocks that have either microfine zinc oxide (Z-cote) or parsol (avobenzone) provide better UVA coverage and are therefore considered to be broad spectrum.
2) The SPF number provides information about the relative amount of protection provided by a product. In studies, most people use their sunblock much more sparingly than is done in the SPF determination tests. The average person gets only one half to one third of the SPF that is on the label. Therefore, while an SPF 15 product may be sufficient in theory, in reality it is best to use a higher SPF sunblock.
3) Recent studies suggest that improved protection from the occurs by applying sunblocks 20 to 30 minutes before the start of sun exposure and reapplying 20 minutes after the exposure has begun.
4) A sunblock's effect will diminish markedly after two hours of use and sooner if swimming or heavy perspiration has been occurring. Reapplication of the sunscreen is necessary to maintain your protection.