

WELL BEING



# SUNSHINE ON MY **SHOULDERS**

SUN SMARTS AND SKIN CARE BASICS FOR A HEALTHY, SUNBURN-FREE SUMMER

By Amanda N. Wegner

“Summer afternoon, summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most Beautiful words in the English language. Two beautiful words to be certain, but with a lovely summer afternoon comes a dose of responsibility ... to take care of your skin and your health.”

*-Author Henry James quoted by fellow author Edith Wharton*

Here, a variety of professionals offer their advice for taking care of yourself while basking in the beauty that is summer.

### **BACK TO BASICS**

Healthy summer skin starts with some easy basics.

- Use sunscreen.
- Wear sunglasses that offer protection against UVA and UVB rays, harmful sunlight that can damage the skin, says Dr. Mark Grzeskowiak, a family medicine physician at Mercy Lake Geneva Medical Center.
- Cover up in light, reflective layers.
- Wear a hat. “After sunscreen, it’s my top tip,” says Jason Boaz, PGA Head Golf Professional at Grand Geneva. “A big key is to keep your ears covered so they don’t get sunburned.”
- Drink lots of water when outdoors. Dr. Mark notes that too much beer or liquor not only impairs your judgment, but it dulls your sense of pain, which could lead to a more severe burn. Alcohol also causes dehydration, so chug a bottle of water between beers.
- Plan your outdoor activities before 10 a.m. or after 3 p.m.; in between, the sun is at its highest point in the sky, leaving you more vulnerable to exposure

and damaging sunrays. If you’re a golfer, this is great news as most courses offer late-afternoon and twilight rates. But plan ahead if you want to hit the links at Grand Geneva after work; the late shift is popular here. Boaz notes that the general public can call two weeks in advance for tee times.





## SUNSCREEN SMARTS

“Sunscreen,” says Dr. Tri Nguyen, a dermatologist practicing at Aurora Health Center in Burlington, “is your first line of defense.”

Unfortunately, many people get it wrong.

Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 that covers UVA and UVB rays. Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before exposure — it needs time to soak into the skin — and slather it on.

Be sure to apply it everywhere; “this includes places normally overlooked like the scalp, lips and tips of ears,” says Cynthia Rosati, an aesthetician at The Spa at Geneva Ridge. Each time you put on sunscreen, use at least an ounce, or the equivalent of a shot glass.

Reapply sunscreen every two hours or after swimming or heavy sweating.

Finally, don’t reserve sunscreen for sunny days. According to the American Academy of Dermatologists, even on a cloudy day, up to 80 percent of the sun’s ultraviolet rays can pass through the clouds. In addition, sand reflects 25 percent and water up to 50 percent of the sun’s rays.

“Use sunscreen everyday,” says Dr. Nguyen. “Sun or no sun.”

## WARNING SIGNS

Spotting a sunburn is easy, but you don’t want one. “A single burn can do a lot of damage,” says Nguyen.

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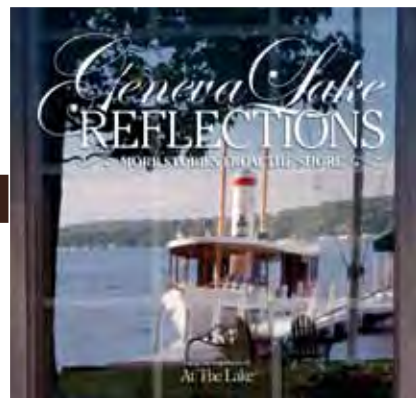


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If you do get sunburned, the first and most important step is to immediately cool the skin, says Rosati.

“Like meat under a broiler, it will keep cooking even after removed from the surface heat as long as there is still heat from within,” says Rosati.

After cooling the skin, she recommends using aloe vera-based products to keep the skin hydrated, and drink plenty of water as well.

While a sunburn is easy to spot, heat stroke and heat exhaustion take a little more awareness, but neither should be taken lightly.

Heat exhaustion, explains Dr. Mark, is a mild form of heat stroke, which is a medical emergency. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include dehydration, excessive sweating, a rise in body temperature, but not above 104 degrees; pale skin that is cool and damp to the touch; rapid and shallow breathing; dizziness, weakness or fainting; headaches. To treat, move to a cool area, remove excess clothing and lie down. Apply cool towels to the skin and drink chilled water. Stay out of the sun for at least an hour. If there’s no improvement or the person becomes confused or disoriented, seek additional medical attention.

Heat stroke can cause organ damage and death and occurs when the body produces more heat than it can release. Call 911 immediately if you witness the following symptoms: temperature above 104 degrees; hallucinations or seizures; nausea, vomiting or diarrhea; headaches; dry skin (because the person has stopped

sweating); increased heart rate and fast breathing.

## TAKING CARE OF OTHERS

Chances are you aren’t hitting the water or backyard barbecue alone, and others in your party, especially children and older adults, might not be as aware of their needs.

Dr. Nguyen says parents should not put sunscreen on babies under six months of age. “Because of their size, they can absorb too much into their bodies.”

Dr. Mark says it’s best to keep infants under six months of age out of the sun altogether.

“They can’t communicate what they want, and their bodies react in very different ways to ours,” he says. “Plus, their temperature control is not as developed as an adult’s.”

For all children, he recommends regular out-of-the-sun rest breaks to rehydrate, cool down and reapply sunscreen as needed.

If an elderly family member is joining your sun-filled festivities, take a similar approach: Encourage them to take breaks in the shade and to drink plenty of water.

“Most elderly people don’t drink as much water as they should to begin with, so they’re already predisposed to possible issues with the heat and sun,” says Dr. Mark. ▲

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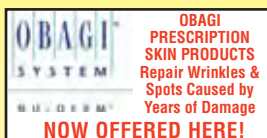


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