

Sunburn

Excessive exposure of direct sunlight to baby's skin and eyes



Signs

- Skin that is warm to the touch
- Blistering
- Chills
- Fussiness
- Fever
 - Axillary [armpit] 98.6° F (37.0° C) or higher
 - Rectally 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher
- Exposed skin that may be red and puffy
- Puffy eyelids
- Decreased activity/sleepiness
- Dehydration:
 - Four or fewer wet diapers in 24 hours
 - Dry mouth
 - Sunken eyes
 - Sunken soft spot on head (fontanel)
 - Extreme irritability
 - Listlessness (decreased activity)
 - Possibly no tears



What to Know

- Babies need fresh air and light. The sun is a good source of Vitamin D.
- A baby's skin is thinner than adult skin and will burn more easily than an adult's. Even babies with naturally darker skin need protection.

- The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Keep your baby out of the sun during these hours.
- The sun's damaging UV rays can bounce back from water, sand, snow or concrete; be particularly careful in these areas.
- Most of the sun's rays can come through the clouds on an overcast day, so use sun protection even on cloudy days.
- Sunburns and too much sun exposure over the years may cause skin cancer, wrinkles and possibly cataracts of the eyes.
- Two or more blistering sunburns as a child or teen increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life.



What to Do

- Babies younger than 6 months of age should be kept out of direct sunlight.
 - A minimal amount of sunscreen may be used when adequate clothing and shade are not available.
- Always protect your baby's head with a brimmed hat. Dress your baby in comfortable/lightweight clothing that covers the body, such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Keep your baby in the shade.

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- Select clothes made of tighter weave. The tighter weave generally protects better than clothes with a looser weave.
- Use a sunscreen of at least SPF 30 that is made for babies or small children.
 - Look for the words “broad-spectrum” on the label.
 - Broad-spectrum sunscreens will screen out both Ultraviolet A and B rays.
 - Be sure to cover all exposed areas.
 - Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outdoors, and reapply as directed or every two to three hours.
- Avoid excessive exposure to direct sunlight. (Even five minutes may be too long.)
- A baby's eyes can be at risk for eye injury from the sun.
 - Sunglasses designed to block at least 99 percent of the sun's rays should be worn.



When to Call Your Health Care Provider

- If your baby gets a sunburn, contact the baby's health care provider at once.
- A severe sunburn is an emergency.

