



# MIDDLEBORO PEDIATRICS

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## CHILDREN AND SUNBURN

Sunburn is a common problem during the summer season. Children, especially those with fair complexions, are at risk for developing severe sunburn. The discomfort and medical complications associated with severe sunburn can be avoided.

Initially, sun exposure should be limited to early mornings and late afternoons. This will promote gradual tanning. Twenty minutes of noonday summer sun exposure will cause a mild sunburn, and 1 to 2 hours will cause a moderate to severe sunburn in a light complexioned person.

Sunburn also occurs on cloudy days and while sitting in the shade because ultraviolet light, which causes the sunburn is reflected from the pavement, sand, and water.

Treatment of mild and moderate sunburn consists of cool tap water compresses followed by the applications of a lotion, such as Alpha Keri lotion. For a severe sunburn which blisters, we should be consulted because there is a danger of infection. For relief of moderate sunburn, soaking in a tub of warm water containing 2 capfuls of Alpha Keri bath oil will relieve some of the discomfort.

If prolonged sun exposure is anticipated, a sunscreen should be used. For infants less than 1 year of age, only PABA free sunscreens should be used. For older children, any sunscreen may be used. Sunscreens are rated by a "SPF" factor. The higher the SPF factor, the better the sun protection. To prevent sunburn in children, a sunscreen with a SPF rating of 15 or better should be used.

Many sunscreens need to be reapplied after swimming, but a few do not. Your local pharmacist will help you choose an appropriate sunscreen.