



Weekly Alert June 27th, 2024

## 1 in 10 Texas adults always use sunscreen

### *Understanding of "SPF" limited*

Although **one in five** Americans will develop skin cancer by age 70, sunscreen use and knowledge remain low. Among Texas adults surveyed, less than 10% reported using sunscreen when they were outside for 15 minutes or more during daylight hours. Just 27% felt that they understood the term SPF "very well."

### **Nearly half of adults rarely or never used sunscreen**

The survey of 542 adults in five states found that 46% of respondents "rarely" or "never" used sunscreen when outside for 15 minutes or more during daylight hours. Men were less likely to use sunscreen than women (55% rarely or never vs. 40%), as were African American respondents vs. whites (61% rarely or never vs 38%).

### **SPH (Sun Protection Factor) is poorly understood**

SPF, or Sun Protection Factor, is the number on a bottle of sunscreen indicating the level of sun protection it provides. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) considers SPF-15 the **minimum** to protect skin from the sun's ultraviolet rays, although many skin doctors **recommend** SPF-30. Only 22% of respondents across the five states surveyed said they understood SPF "very well."

Most concerning was the finding that respondents with children living in their homes were less likely to understand SPF "very well" than those without children in their homes (18% vs. 25%). Children are **more sensitive** to sun exposure than adults, and sunburns in childhood increase **lifetime risk** of skin cancer. Sun protection is especially important for kids; however, sunscreen is not recommended for infants under 6 months. The FDA recommends keeping babies out of the sun as the best protection. Understanding of SPF was also different between gender and racial groups. Men were less likely than women (16% vs. 26%), and African Americans were less likely than whites (17% vs. 27%) to understand SPF "very well."

### **Spread sunscreen knowledge**

Sunscreen is essential for anyone spending time outside during hot Texas summers. Please share the resources below highlighting the importance of skin protection and what to look for in sunscreen.

This week's report is based on responses from a panel of 542 adult residents of Texas (n = 53), St. Louis, MO (n = 146), Baltimore, MD (n = 169), Omaha, NE (n = 85), and Colorado (n = 88) surveyed June 15–17, 2024. Explore these data and more at [iHeard Texas](#).

## Shareable Resources

Click to download resources to share in your community.

Remember to include [#iHeardTexas](#) [#iHeardTX](#) when sharing on social media!

### SPF, why is it important?

**What does SPF mean on sunscreen?**

Only **27%** of Texans felt they understood “SPF” very well. Swipe to learn about your sunscreen and skin protection!

Sun protection  
iHeard Texas

Sunscreen SPF 30

This infographic features a blue background with a sun and clouds. It includes a dark blue box with white text stating that only 27% of Texans understand SPF well. Below this is a slider icon and an image of a sunscreen bottle labeled 'Sunscreen SPF 30'. The iHeard Texas logo is in the top left corner.

**SPF, or Sun Protection Factor, is the number on a bottle of sunscreen. It shows the level of sun protection. Bigger numbers mean more protection.**

Skin doctors recommend using **SPF-30** or higher. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) says sunscreen must be **at least** SPF-15 to protect skin from the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Source: FDA

iHeard Texas

This infographic has a blue background with a sun and clouds. It features a dark blue box with white text explaining SPF. Below is an image of four sunscreen products: a spray bottle (SPF 50), a jar (SPF 40), a bottle (SPF 35), and a tube (SPF 30). A dark blue box at the bottom contains a recommendation from skin doctors and the FDA. The iHeard Texas logo is in the top right corner.

**Sunscreen quick facts**

- Even on cloudy days, you should wear sunscreen.
- People of **all skin colors are at risk** for skin cancer and sunburn, and benefit from sunscreen.
- There's no such thing as waterproof sunscreen.** Make sure to reapply at least every two hours.
- Sunscreen expires after 3 years: **throw out old bottles!**

Source: FDA

iHeard Texas

This infographic has a blue background with a sun and clouds. It features a dark blue box with white text for the title. Below are four white boxes with black text, each containing a quick fact. The iHeard Texas logo is in the top right corner.

**How can I protect my skin from sun damage?**

- Limit time in the sun, especially between 10 am and 2 pm
- Cover exposed skin
- Use sunscreen with SPF-30 or higher
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours while outside
- Wear a hat and sunglasses
- Check your sunscreen's expiration date

Source: FDA

iHeard Texas

This infographic has a blue background with a sun and clouds. It features a dark blue box with white text for the title. Below are six icons with corresponding text: a sun with a slash, a long-sleeved shirt and pants, a sunscreen jar, a sunscreen bottle, a hat and sunglasses, and a sunscreen jar with a date. The iHeard Texas logo is in the top right corner.

#### Suggested Caption:

Understanding your sunscreen is essential for good sun protection! ☐☐ Make sure you choose the right SPF (30 and above), apply it correctly, and reapply often. Stay safe & stay protected!

[#iHeardTexas](#) [#SunSafety](#) [#KnowYourSunscreen](#) [#HealthySkin](#)

[Download here](#)

## It says "SPF" but what does it mean?

Sun protection  
iHeard Texas

### What do different **SPF numbers** mean on a bottle of sunscreen?

- **SPF-30 blocks 97% of the sun's UVB rays.** That's a lot. No sunscreen can block 100% of UVB rays.
- **Sunscreen has to be re-applied every 2 hours no matter what its SPF level is.** It is especially important to reapply after swimming, sweating or towelng off.

Source: *American Academy of Dermatology Association*

### *Suggested Caption:*

SPF protects against ultraviolet (UV) radiation that can damage skin even on cloudy days. UVA rays can age skin, cause wrinkles and spots, and can pass through window glass. UVB rays are the primary cause of sunburn and can be blocked by window glass.

#iHeardTexas #SunSafety #KnowYourSunscreen #HealthySkin

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## How much should we wear?

Sun protection  
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Wait, how much sunscreen should I actually be using?

More than you think. Most people don't use enough!

Covering all exposed skin on your face and body takes **2-3 tablespoons of sunscreen.**

Wow, I definitely need to up my sunscreen game. Thanks!

Source: *Skin Cancer Foundation*

### *Suggested Caption:*

Have you ever wondered about the difference between lotion and spray sunscreen? iHeard is here to help! Both are effective, but if you're unsure about how to spray sunscreen on correctly, go with lotion.

[Download here](#)

## Here's a full page of information for you!

**What does SPF mean on sunscreen?**

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**Quick facts!**

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Covering all exposed skin on your face and body takes 2-3 tablespoons of sunscreen.

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Sources: FDA, Skin Cancer Foundation, American Academy of Dermatology Association

[Download here](#)

## Combined Resource

Click to download a printer-friendly PDF with all the information above!

[Download here](#)

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