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# AAP News

## **Melanoma prevention: Keep kids protected from sun's ultraviolet rays**

Trisha Koriath

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## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Melanoma prevention: Keep kids protected from sun's ultraviolet rays

Planning a summer vacation near water? Be sure to bring along your family's sun protection arsenal.

Children whose yearly vacations are near the water have 5% more small moles and a greater risk of developing melanoma, according to a recent study from the Colorado School of Public Health.

It takes just one sunburn to double a child's risk of developing melanoma. Yet, half of all children get their first sunburn or suntan within their first two summers, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.

Pediatric melanoma is rare, affecting 3% of U.S. children. Warning signs include a mole or lesion with an odd shape or irregular edges and a diameter larger than a pencil eraser, according to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Many are black or brown. Half of children with melanoma do not follow this pattern, so parents should report any suspicious growths to their child's pediatrician.



Umbrellas do not completely protect children because ultraviolet rays reflect off sand, water, snow and other surfaces, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

To prevent skin damage, the AAP offers the following suggestions:

- Keep children out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Use a sunscreen made for children with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and apply 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply sunscreen every 1½ to 2 hours, particularly while in the water.
- Dress your child in lightweight cotton clothing with long sleeves, long pants and a hat with a wide brim.
- Use a beach umbrella to keep the child in the shade as much as possible.
- Keep babies under 6 months of age out of direct sunlight. Use sunscreen sparingly if adequate clothing and shade are not available. Sunscreen may be used on small areas of the body, such as the face and the backs of the hands.

— Trisha Koriath

#### Protection from ultraviolet sun rays

The sun's invisible ultraviolet rays are what cause damage to your child's skin, even on foggy or hazy days. Hats and

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