



# ParentLetter

An update for parents

CLARKSTOWN  
pediatrics



Summer 2017

## How much Screen Time should My Child Have? Make sure you have media-free times together!

by Erica Berg, MD



How can children use *television-smartphone-ipad-computer-media* in a healthy way? We turn to our *American Academy of Pediatrics* for policies about children's health. Until now, the *AAP* had discouraged **any** screen time for children under the age of 2. New research has given them reasons to update their advice :

**Avoid** screen media in children under 18 months, except video chatting which is fine for children of any age.

**Parents** with toddlers between 18 months and 2 years of age who choose to introduce digital media should make a plan about their child's screen use, always with high-quality programming. They should also be with their children as they watch. Toddlers rely on their caregivers to help them grasp the concepts and words they see and hear.

**While** the recommendations loosened a bit for toddlers, they are a bit more strict for kids age 2 to 5! The *AAP* now says that entertainment time, including use of apps and TV, should be capped at **no more than one hour**, decreased from the old recommendation of two hours. More use has been linked to obesity, sleep problems and other issues. However, watching a moderate amount of high-quality programming like *Sesame Street*, has been shown to improve cognitive and social outcomes and reading (literacy) in children aged 3 to 5.

**For** children 6 and older, place consistent limits on time spent using media. Make sure it does not interfere with adequate physical activity, sleep, and other healthy media free activities. Teach online respect.

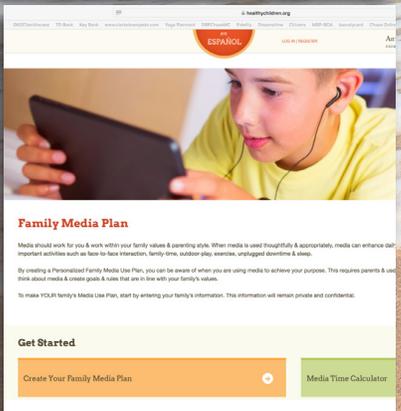
**This** policy shifts the thinking regarding media and is asking parents to be mentors or guides for their young kids as they encounter all these new technologies.

**Of** course, parents don't have to feel pressured to introduce screens. These are very intuitive machines and can be integrated at any time.

**The** emphasis is no longer just on how much time kids spend using digital media, but how they use it.

Take a look at the **Family Media Use Plan** at **healthychildren.org!**

[www.healthychildren.org/English/media](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/media) or [/Spanish/media](http://www.healthychildren.org/Spanish/media)



[www.clarkstownped.com](http://www.clarkstownped.com)

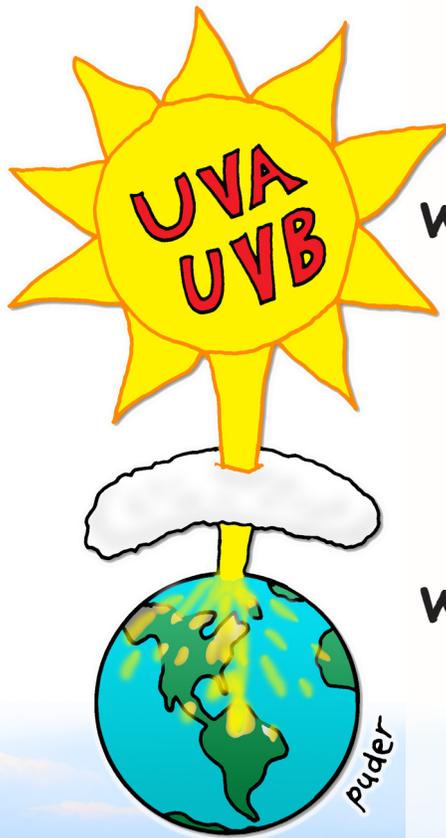


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# Protect Young Skin From the Sun!

by Doug Puder, MD  
and Monica Hamburg, MD

Protecting your child's skin from the harmful rays of the sun is so important because most skin cancer later in life is caused by sun exposure as a child. More than 2 million skin cancers are diagnosed every year, and the more sun exposure your child gets, the higher the risk of cancer. Remember, everyone needs sunscreen, no matter how pigmented your skin! Be aware that you actually need sunscreen year-round, not just in the summer (especially skiers)!



## Which sunscreen is best for my child?

Always choose a sunscreen that says "Broad-spectrum" protection (protects from ultra-violet *UVA* and *UVB* rays) on the bottle. Both types of rays cause skin cancer. You should always use *SPF 30* or higher, and consider *SPF 50* or higher for infants and toddlers. Buy water resistant sunscreen so that you're protected in the water, but still reapply after swimming! Remember to check the expiration date. Toss the bottle once it's 2 years old. Don't store sunscreen in a hot car as it may degrade faster and stop working.

## What about my baby?

Ideally babies should avoid **all** sun exposure. Keep babies in the shade and keep them in long sleeves and pants, wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, but make sure they do not get overheated and are drinking plenty of fluids. A baby's skin is much more sensitive than an older child's and sunscreen should not be applied until they are at least 6 months of age. Sunscreens that contain zinc oxide or titanium dioxide tend to be less irritating to very young skin.

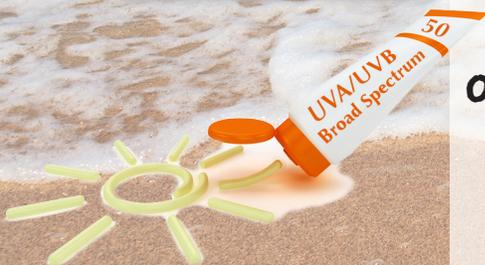
## How to apply sunscreen:

Generously apply sunscreen to dry skin 15 minutes before heading out and cover all sun exposed areas (those not covered by clothes). Don't forget ears, hands and feet! Lips can also get skin cancer so apply lipbalm that contains *SPF 30* or higher. It takes about one ounce (six teaspoons) of sunscreen to cover your body. Sprays may not be as effective as lotions or gels because it is hard to know if you covered all the sun-exposed parts sufficiently, and some of them have fumes that should not be inhaled. **Reapply every 2 hours no matter what SPF you are using** and reapply after swimming or sweating, even if your sunscreen is waterproof. Use sunscreen even on cloudy days as UV radiation still gets through the clouds!

## Other ways to protect your child from the sun:

No sunscreen can block 100% of the sun's rays. Even with the protection of sunscreen, you should avoid sun exposure during the times when the sun rays are strongest, 10 am to 2 pm; if your

**80% of  
your lifetime  
risk of  
skin cancer  
is caused  
by sunburn  
in childhood!**



shadow is shorter than you, seek shade! Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and pants. Did you know that water reflects sun rays and makes them even stronger (as does sand and snow)? Everyone should **avoid tanning beds** which expose you to dangerous *UV* rays too. Remember to check your child's skin and consider seeing a dermatologist if you see any growing/changing moles.



## What if my child gets a sunburn?

Treat a sunburn as soon as you see it. First, get the child out of the sun! Try a cool bath, an unscented moisturizer to cool the skin, and have them drink extra water. If you see blisters, this is a second-degree burn. Allow the blisters to heal untouched, do not pop a blister! It is there to prevent infection. If blisters cover a large area or there is fever, chills, or headache, your child needs to be seen immediately. Keep sunburned skin out of the sun completely until healed.



**Try to stay out of the sun until your shadow is longer than you are!**

## Buying Shoes for Your Child:

Your child's feet only need shoes to keep protected and warm. Barefoot people in *Central Africa* or the *Solomon Islands* are less likely to have foot pain and deformity than those with a full closet of shoes! Shoes were invented about 10,000 years ago. Heels were added to shoes in the 16th century to "*stabilize the mounted warrior in the stirrup*". Fashion has changed shoes since then, as has the wish to look a little taller.

**There is no need for "corrective shoes"** which are rigid and compressive. The notion that a healthy child's foot requires support is false. These shoes often cause foot problems as an adult. Your baby's footprint changes with age from flatfoot to arched by age 8 years. Shoes do not help the arch develop, and flatfoot does not need to be corrected unless there is foot pain.

So don't worry about buying a "proper" shoe. Comfort and proper fitting is what counts. It should have lots of room in the toes, be flexible, and be flat (unless you are *jousting*). Think of bare feet when choosing: traction similar to barefoot, lightweight, good cushioning. Don't be surprised how quickly a child's foot grows!



by Doug Puder, MD

We hope you find our Parentletter helpful and informative. Please keep in mind that receipt of this newsletter does not create a doctor/patient relationship and that it is not meant to serve as a substitute for professional medical advice. For particular pediatric medical concerns, including decisions about diagnoses, medications and other treatments, or if you have any questions after reading this newsletter, we encourage you to speak with your child's pediatrician.

# Whole Fruits, yes! Fruit Juice, no! Really? No Juice for Babies?

by Doug Puder, MD



The Nutrition Committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics no longer recommends any fruit juice for babies before their first birthday! "Kids should eat their fruit, not drink it!"

Although those juice boxes are very convenient with their single serving box and attached straw, parents should consider skipping it for a number of reasons: They are sugary drinks which have been linked to more cavities in children's teeth, to obesity in some children, and can be a cause of diarrhea. By the way, those juice boxes are expensive!

Although some vitamins are present in fruit juice, it is mostly "natural" sugar water. It lacks fiber and protein critical for a child's growth. A small glass of juice has nearly three times the sugar of an entire piece of fruit. There is an additional concern of infection when parents give unpasteurized juice. We prescribe vitamins with fluoride for all of our Rockland County patients (and Orange County) starting at the age of six months. So the vitamins in juice add little.

These are the new recommendations of the AAP (and Clarkstown Pediatrics):

**Infants until  
12 months**

*Do not routinely give fruit juice to infants younger than 12 months since it offers no nutrition benefit at this age.*

**1 to 3  
Years**

*Limit fruit juice to 4 ounces per day (1/2 cup)  
Don't let your toddler carry a box/cup of juice all day*

**4 to 6  
Years**

*Limit fruit juice to 4 - 6 ounces per day (1/2-3/4 cup)  
Don't let your child carry a box/"sippy" cup of juice all day*

**7 to 18  
Years**

*Limit fruit juice to 8 ounces per day (1 cup)*



We encourage parents to give whole fruits several times a day to provide more fiber and be more filling to a child. One cup of whole fruit is recommended daily to age 3, one and a half to age seven and about two cups daily afterwards. A small apple, or one banana, or one orange give about one cup of fruit. For more detail, visit:



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