

# Sunburn

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Sunburn occurs when skin cells, not protected from direct exposure to the sun, are burned. Depending on the length of the exposure the result can range from a mild burning sensation to severe blistering of the affected area. The Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio reminds older adults that they are more susceptible to sunburns than the general population and certain medications can cause the skin to burn more quickly, placing them at greater risk.

## **Preventing Sunburn:**

- Avoid exposure during the intense sunlight hours from 10 am to 3 pm
- Stay out of direct sunlight - light cloud cover won't necessarily protect you from the sun
- Apply sunscreen with a minimum of 15 SPF prior to exposure to sun
- Wear broad-brimmed hats to shadow the face, ears and neck
- Wear light-colored and lightweight long sleeved shirts to minimize exposure to sun
- Pay special attention around water and concrete - they all reflect the sun and will intensify its effects

## **What to look for:**

- Skin is red, tender and warm to touch
- Blistering may occur
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Fever or chills
- Dizziness
- Rash
- Peeling skin several days later

Note: Symptoms may not appear for several hours and the full effect of the burn may take up to 24 hours to occur.

## **Treatment:**

- Cool compresses, moistened washcloths placed in freezer, or taking a cool bath will help minimize pain and swelling
- Pain medications such as aspirin or Tylenol to reduce pain and swelling, but always consult your family physician