

Treating Sunburn

Rather than treating sunburn, the best action is to take steps to prevent sunburn...such as wearing sunscreens (SPF 15+), staying out of the sun between the peak hours of 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., and wearing clothing and 100 percent UV protective sunglasses to protect your skin and eyes. If a sunburn is not avoided, however, caring for it at home (and seeking medical help when necessary) can help relieve symptoms:

- Drink plenty of water, and watch for signs of dehydration, especially in babies and children (signs: dry, sticky mouth; dark, yellow urine and not much of it; having no energy, or acting fussy or edgy).
- Take a cool bath or use a wet cloth to sooth the skin.
- Take acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or Ibuprophen (e.g., Advil) for pain or mild fever. **Note:** Though

aspirin may help, it should not be given to anyone 20 years old or younger due to risks of a condition called Reye's Syndrome.

- Use a moisturizing lotion to help with itching. **Note:** There is nothing you can do to prevent peeling – it's just part of the healing process after a sunburn.
- Do not break blisters.
- Seek medical help if the sunburn covers a large portion of the body with blisters, high fever is present, there is extreme pain, or home treatment does not seem to work after a few days.

Source:

1. Kemper, D.W. (2006). Healthwise Handbook: A Self-Care Guide for You and Your Family (17th ed.). Boise, ID, pp 55-56.

