

## **SUNSCREENS FDA New Rules**

In 2011, the FDA changed the rules about how sunscreens are labeled. The actual sunscreen products have not changed, only the labeling on the bottles.

The important guidelines about sunscreen use have not changed. These include:

- Apply it thickly. If you apply a thin amount, you get less protection. Most people receive less than half of the sunscreen's possible protection because they apply it too thinly. That is why sprays are usually less effective than creams or gels.
- Reapply it every 2 hours if you are in the sun. Reapply it right after swimming or sweating.
- Protective clothing such as hats and long sleeves should be used with sunscreen whenever practical.
- Use sunscreen labeled SPF 30 or above.

### **The main points of the new rules are:**

- Sunscreens may be labeled "broad-spectrum" if they provide protection against both UVA and UVB radiation according to FDA-sanctioned test methods.
- Only broad-spectrum sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher may state that they protect against skin cancer if used as directed with other sun protection measures.
- Broad-spectrum sunscreens with SPFs of 2-14 must display a warning that the product has not been shown to help prevent skin cancer or early skin aging.
- The terms "sunblock," "sweatproof" and "waterproof" are no longer allowed on sunscreen labels.
- Sunscreens may claim to be "water-resistant," but must specify whether they protect the skin for 40 or 80 minutes of swimming or sweating, based on standard testing. Sunscreens that are not water-resistant must instruct consumers to use a water-resistant sunscreen if swimming or sweating.