



## Sunscreen plain English Questions and Answers

### Why should I use sunscreen?

New Zealand has the highest rate of melanoma in the world, and other skin cancers are also very common. You can help reduce your risk of skin cancer by using sunscreen the right way. Using sunscreen is one of five steps you can take to be SunSmart.

### How can I be SunSmart?

You can be SunSmart by following these five simple steps from September to April, especially between 10am to 4pm:

1. Slip - on a shirt with collar and sleeves
2. Slop - on broad spectrum Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30+ sunscreen
3. Slap - on a hat with a wide brim
4. Wrap - on sun glasses
5. Stay in the shade.

### What type of sunscreen should I buy?

Buy a broad spectrum sunscreen that has a SPF of at least 30+. Sunscreens labelled AS/NZS2604 are recommended.

### When should I use sunscreen?

Use sunscreen on skin not covered by clothing when you're outside, between September and April.

Wear sunscreen at any time of the year when you are outside in the mountains, near snow or ice, out on the water, or near other highly shiny surfaces, including sand.

### Why should I apply sunscreen at least 15 minutes before I go outside?

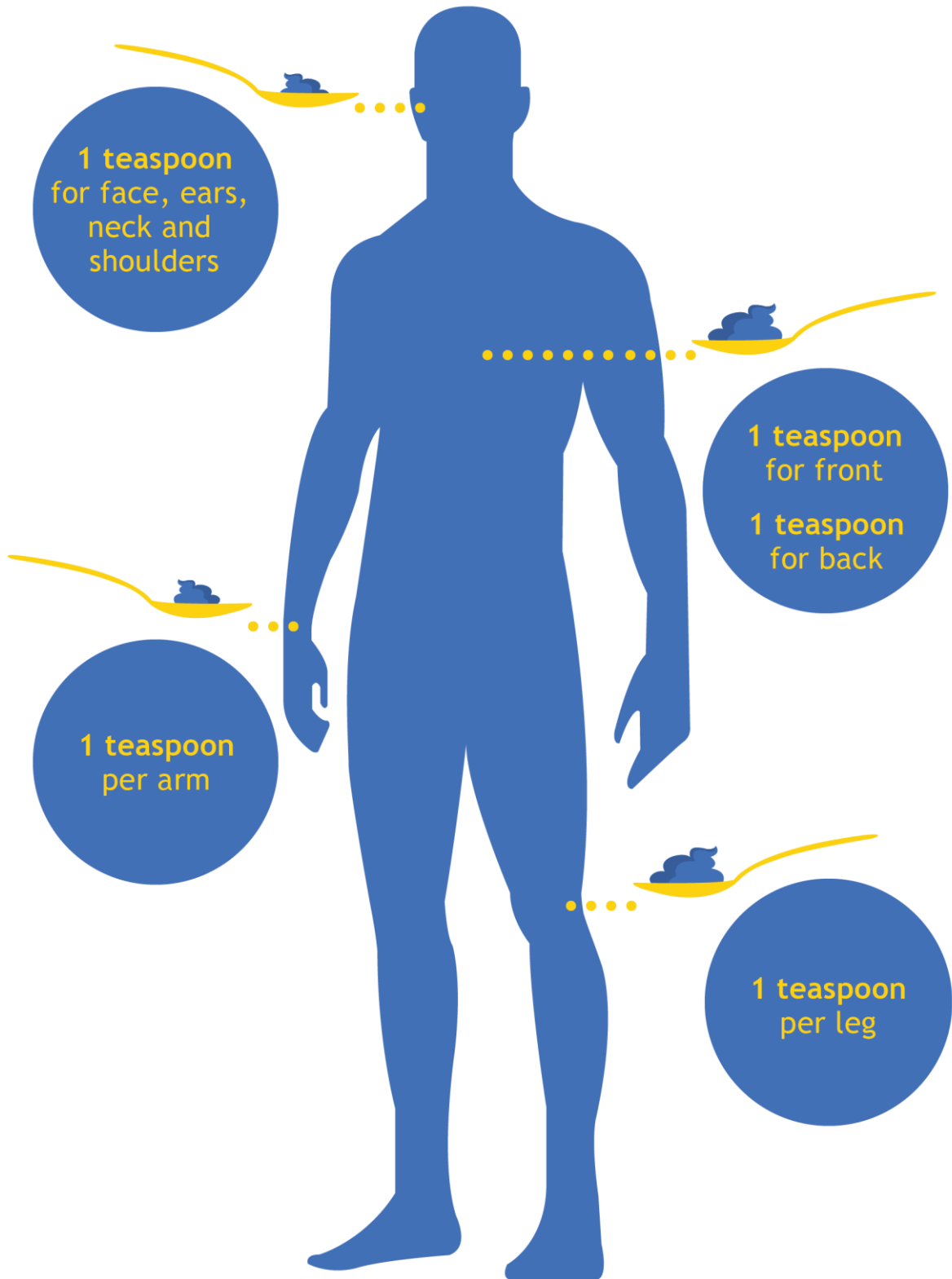
For best protection, apply your sunscreen at least 15 minutes before you go outside. This gives the sunscreen time to form a physical barrier (a cover) on the skin.

### Can children apply their own sunscreen?

It depends on your child's age and how responsible they are. The Cancer Society suggest you watch young children put on their sunscreen.

## How much sunscreen should I use?

Aim for at least a teaspoon for each arm and leg, plus your front and back torso, and one teaspoon for your face, ears and neck.



### **Should I put more sunscreen on during the day?**

- You should reapply your sunscreen, at least, every 2 hours or more often when swimming or sweating from September to April.
- From September to April stay in the shade as much as you can. If you can't do this - follow the five SunSmart steps (slip, slop, slap, wrap and stay in the shade).

### **Will sunscreen damage my skin?**

Before using a sunscreen, try a patch test. Put a small amount behind your knee or on your wrist (or your child's) at least 24 hours before you plan to use it. Stop using the sunscreen if your skin changes colour or becomes sore.

### **Can I burn if I use sunscreen?**

Sunscreen is one part of being SunSmart. The reasons for sun burn could be:

- you haven't used all the SunSmart steps (slip, slop, slap, wrap and stay in the shade)
- you haven't put on enough sunscreen
- you've exercised or swum and your sun screen has rubbed off
- you've been out in the sun for too long
- your sunscreen has passed its expiry date (it's too old)
- your sunscreen has not been stored correctly.

### **How should I store sunscreen?**

Keep sunscreen in a cool place. Sunscreen that has been left out in the sun or near other sources of heat may not work. For more information check the label on your sunscreen.

### **Who can I talk to about being SunSmart?**

You can get free advice from the Cancer Society. Phone the Cancer Information Helpline on 0800 CANCER (226 237); or by email at [info@cancersoc.org.nz](mailto:info@cancersoc.org.nz); or contact your local Cancer Society.

### **Other links:**

<http://www.cancernz.org.nz/reducing-your-cancer-risk/sunsmart/>

<http://sunsmart.org.nz/>

[http://www.cancer.org.au/Healthprofessionals/patientfactsheets/Lifestyle/Be\\_sunsmart.htm](http://www.cancer.org.au/Healthprofessionals/patientfactsheets/Lifestyle/Be_sunsmart.htm)