Travel with sunscreen

You are probably in the habit of packing sunscreen for a day at the beach, pool or lake, but the sun shines 365 days a year!

You need protection much of that time to reduce your lifetime sun-exposure total. Everyday exposure counts; you do not have to be actively sunbathing to get a damaging dose of sun.

Use a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher whenever you spend time outdoors; this means you and the children!

Apply liberally and evenly to all exposed skin. Be sure to cover often-missed spots: lips, ears, around eyes, neck, scalp, hands, and feet. Reapply at least every 2 hours, more often if some of the product comes off while swimming, sweating or towel-drying. Choose lotion, gel, spray, cream or stick form.

Sunscreen is one of the most important travel accessories you’ll need, whether you’re at the beach, in the tropics, in the desert, or in the city!

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EARLY CHILDHOOD

Smart Parenting

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION  ■  July 2015

Make travel memories with your kids

Tips for trouble-free travel with children

Travel with children is different from travel without them, no doubt about it. But thoughtful planning can make your trip a good one for both you and your child.

According to Saralee Jamieson, MU Extension human development specialist, “Your attitude is important. Expect the unexpected and be prepared to change plans when your child becomes bored, overtired or ill. And don’t try to relive that “perfect trip” B.C. (Before Children).”

Keep in mind that when people look back on their lives, the times they remember most are the trips they’ve taken with their families. So don’t get bogged down by little problems. Try these ideas to enjoy travel with kids.

Thoughtful planning and packing

♦ If you have a toddler, be sure to inspect the safety features in a hotel or motel room such as electrical outlets, dangling cords and lamps that can be pulled over.

If you’re traveling by car

♦ Plan on stops every two or three hours. Kids need the change of pace. If you travel into the night, schedule a last stop so kids can brush their teeth, wash their faces or even change into PJs.

♦ To make sure fingers are safely out of the way before closing car doors, play the “all hands reach for the sky” game or have your child give himself a hug before you close the door. This is a good habit to get into even when not traveling.

♦ Encourage children to keep mileage charts to record the distance driven each day. Let them mark your route on map with a highlighter.

Sleeping away from home

♦ When you make reservations, ask for ground-level motel rooms to avoid carrying children and belongings up and down stairs or elevators.

♦ If kids are in the end room, you can worry less about how much noise they make.
Summer is a great time for outdoor fun—picnics in the park, fairs or splashing in the pool. Linda Rellergert, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist suggests you keep everyone sun safe with some recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- The sun’s power is strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. so plan most of your outdoor activities for early morning or late afternoon.
- Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before heading outdoors to increase its effectiveness.
- Wear tightly woven, light colored clothing that provides protection from the sun. Babies and others who are especially sun sensitive should wear lightweight clothing that covers arms and legs.
- Sunglasses (with 99% UV protection) and brimmed hats that protect eyes, ears and necks are also important for everyone, even babies.
- Send sunscreen along with children to daycare, camp or summer school every day. Check that the adults in charge of these programs apply the sunscreen properly. Teach your children how to use sunscreen themselves.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 to 50 and labeled “broad spectrum” to protect against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Sunscreen that contains zinc oxide and titanium dioxide is safe for most sensitive skin. However, ask your physician about sunscreens for babies under 6 months of age.
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming, sweating, toweling off or after two hours unless a shorter time is recommended on the label.
- Use sunscreen even on cloudy days as 80% of the sun’s rays penetrate cloud cover.
- Babies younger than 6 months old should never be exposed to direct sunlight. Keep them in the shade under trees, shelters, a stroller canopy or an umbrella.

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**Smart snacking**

The summer months can bring along many adventures. Adventures that can make you hungry.

Whether you are traveling to the local pool or across the country, planning for healthy snacking can help you stay in control of what you eat and snack a little healthier.

Often, prepackaged snack items can be very high in added sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats.

According to Megan Webb, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, “If we wait until we need food to consider what we want as a snack, our choices may be very limited and possibly expensive.”

When possible, consider taking a small cooler with you. Fill it with pre-washed and ready to eat fruits and vegetables—try grapes, apples, carrots, or snap peas. Nonfat yogurt is another great option for your cooler.

If it is not possible to take a cooler, or you just don’t want to—try some of these healthier snack ideas—pretzels (look for whole-grain, low sodium pretzels), graham crackers, plain air-popped popcorn, or low sodium sunflower seeds or nuts. These items can be purchased in large bags and then packed by you into single serving baggies. If your family likes granola-type bars, look for bars that do not have a lot of added sugar.

Read the nutrition facts label: try to keep sugar, sodium, and saturated fat low while looking for things like fiber and protein. Read the ingredients list, items are listed in descending order by quantity.

If sugar (or a form of sugar, like high fructose corn syrup) is one of the first few ingredients—perhaps find a different product. It is also a good idea to plan to take water, or a bottle for water with you. This can help you avoid grabbing a less healthy sugar-sweetened beverage like soda.

Planning your snacks in advance can help you eat healthy, maintain control of your food choices, avoid fast food and impulse snack purchases (like candy), and possibly help save you money.

Make your summer adventures fun and healthy by thinking ahead and planning healthy snacks and beverages.