

# Prescribing of Sun Creams

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NHS guidance is that sunscreens should only be prescribed for sun protection against UV radiation in abnormal cutaneous photosensitivity resulting from genetic disorders or photodermatoses, including vitiligo and those resulting from radiotherapy; chronic or recurrent herpes simplex labialis. Photosensitive dermatoses are made up of the following conditions: polymorphic light eruption (PLE), actinic prurigo, chronic actinic dermatitis, solar urticaria, hydroa vacciniforme, xeroderma pigmentosum, porphyria, drug-induced photosensitivity, photocontact allergic reactions and phytophoto dermatitis.

For routine sun protection patients should be advised to self-purchase sunscreen preparations with dual protection against UVB and UVA rays (see below) with an SPF value minimum of 30. Advisory sunscreen because of risk of skin cancer is not a qualifying condition and should be regarded as routine sun protection.

## Advise all patients on the following:

- Skin should be protected with clothing (hat, t-shirt sunglasses) and exposure to sun between 11am and 3pm minimised by staying in the shade. Babies and young children should be kept out of direct sunlight.
- UVB is mainly responsible for sunburn and has strong links to malignant melanoma and basal cell carcinoma. SPF indicates the level of protection a product gives to UVB but not UVA.
- UVA is associated with skin ageing and can also cause skin cancer. Check preparations for a UVA seal - a logo with 'UVA' inside a circle -which indicates that a product meets the EU recommendation for sun creams to offer a UVA protection factor equivalent to at least a third of their SPF.
- Approximately 30 mL sunscreen is required to cover the average body of an adult.
- Sunscreen should be applied 15-30minutes before sun exposure. Reapply every two hours and immediately after swimming, perspiring and towel drying or if it has rubbed off.
- "Once a day" products can be accidentally removed by water, sweating, abrasion and by towel drying, all of which reduce effectiveness. It is recommended by the British Association of Dermatologists that these products are also re-applied every two hours.

The following sunscreens are GREEN traffic light on the ELMMB formulary when prescribed for the indications listed above: Anthelios® melt in cream (UVA + UVB protection UVB-SPF 50+); Sensense® Ultra Lotion (UVA +UV protection UVB-SPF 50+); Uvistat® cream (UVB-SPF 20)