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Sun burns may cause skin damage

Jennifer Brown/Assistant photo editor

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Summer gives students the opportunity to take a break from classes and participate in different activities, but it is important to be cautious while spending time in the sun.

Kathie R. Blesch, PA-C of Health Services, said students should buy sun block containing SPF 15 or higher.

Blesch said sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes before going outside.

"Because sunscreen tends to be rubbed or washed off with sweating or water exposure, it should be reapplied at least every two hours and immediately after swimming or heavy sweating," she said.

Dr. Sheila Baker, health service medical director, said if a person does not use sunscreen, the effects can be damaging. Baker said these damaging effects can include premature aging, cancer and wrinkled skin.

When buying sunscreen, Baker said look for the skin cancer foundation's seal of recommendation.

"This guarantees that a sunscreen product meets the highest standards for safety and effectiveness," she said.

Baker said the best time to be outdoors is between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Baker said students need to stay covered with clothing including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.

"Tightly woven fabrics and dark colors, such as deep blue and black, or bright colors, such as orange and red, offer more protection," she said.

Ryan Messinger, assistant director of health services, said a sunburn is often caused by not wearing sunscreen.

Messinger said a sunburn can also become swollen and infected.

"For minor sunburns, treatments can include aloe vera gels, various creams on the market, cool baths and drinking plenty of water to stay hydrated," he said.

Kim Dowland, NP-C, said different sunburns have specific treatments.

Dowland said students should keep the sunburn cool and moist. "A cool bath or aloe may feel soothing to the burn," she said.

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Lester Wilkerson

posted 7/01/10 @ 8:24 AM CST

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