



Test Your Sunscreen IQ

JENNIFER LINDER, MD

Sunscreen is an essential part of any sun protection program. And the more you know about how sunscreen works and its proper application and use, the better you'll be able to protect your skin. Take this quiz now and find out your sunscreen IQ.

PART I: SPF

1 A sunscreen's SPF, which stands for Sun Protection Factor, measures protection against the sun's ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation. SPF numbers indicate

- a. How long the skin will take to redden in the sun when using the sunscreen, compared to how long the skin would take to redden without sunscreen
- b. The percentage of active ingredients in the sunscreen
- c. The number of hours you can stay out in the sun

2 A sunscreen with an SPF of 15 protects against approximately 93 percent of the sun's UVB rays. A sunscreen with an SPF 30 protects against

- a. 93 percent of the sun's UVB rays, and 93 percent of the sun's UVA rays
- b. 97 percent of the sun's UVB rays
- c. 100 percent of the sun's UVB rays

3 If you apply a sunscreen with an SPF of 20, and then apply another sunscreen with an SPF of 30, what is the total value of the SPF you've applied?

- a. SPF 25
- b. SPF 30
- c. SPF 50



PART II: ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

4 How many sunscreen ingredients are currently available in the US?

- a. 12
- b. 15
- c. 17

5 Sunscreen ingredients fall into two broad categories, inorganic/physical and organic/chemical. The two inorganic ingredients are:

- a. Titanium dioxide and cinoxate
- b. Cinoxate and zinc oxide
- c. Titanium dioxide and zinc oxide

PART III: SUNSCREEN USE

6 Doctors recommend applying one ounce (two tablespoons) of sunscreen to the body 30 minutes prior to sun exposure, and then again

- a. After one hour outside
- b. After one hour outside on sunny days
- c. After two hours outside

7 Because children have delicate skin, sunscreen should not be used on babies

- a. Under three months
- b. Under six months
- c. Under one year



8 For a sunscreen to provide adequate UVA spectrum protection, it must include one or more of the following ingredients:

- a. homosalate, octinoxate, PABA, octisalate
- b. avobenzone, titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, ecamsule (Mexoryl™)
- c. cinoxate, ensulizole, octocrylene, Padimate O

9 Water-resistant sunscreen:

- a. Has to be reapplied after 40 minutes in the water
- b. Has to be reapplied after 90 minutes in the water
- c. Does not need to be reapplied

10 When stored properly, sunscreen should last for how long after the manufacturing date stamped on the package?

- a. 9 months
- b. 1 year
- c. 2 years



For more information on sunscreens, including products bearing our Seal of Recommendation: www.skincancer.org/seal-of-recommendation. ■

DR. LINDER is a dermatologist and Mohs surgeon in private practice in Scottsdale, AZ, and a clinical instructor in skin cancer surgery and the use of cosmetic injectables at The University of California, San Francisco, Department of Dermatology.



Answers

1=a; 2=b; 3=b; 4=c; 5=c; 6=c; 7=b; 8=b; 9=a; 10=c