



# the truth about spf

Don't know your  
UVA from your UVB?  
We asked top cosmetic  
dermatologist  
Dr Sam Bunting to  
set us straight  
about SUNCARE

## 1.

**MYTH: Having a tan is fine, as long as I don't overdo the sunbathing and burn.**

**FACT:** "To aim to get a tan at the same time as being concerned about keeping your skin healthy is a contradiction in terms," says Bunting. "After skin is exposed to sunlight, it produces more melanin [the dark pigment that gives skin its colour] in order to help absorb further UV radiation, and skin becomes darker as a result. So a tan is actually a sign that skin has been damaged and is trying to protect itself." The safest way to get a summer glow? Fake it with a good quality self-tan. >

## 2.

**MYTH: Wearing a low SPF on my body is OK, but I must wear a high SPF on my face.**

**FACT:** "Skin is skin, and you should take care of the skin on your body just as much as the skin on your face," says Bunting. "I recommend using a minimum of SPF 30 broad-spectrum sunscreen on your body and face to guard against burning and reduce the risk of premature ageing. For people with fair skin, I'd strongly suggest applying SPF 50."

## 3.

**MYTH: Wearing SPF 15 will keep me protected from the sun 15 times longer than using nothing at all on my skin.**

**FACT:** Technically, this is true. However, as there are so many variables – from the differing strength of the sun, to the amount of sunscreen you apply and the various skin types of different users – Bunting believes "it's better to get into the habit of reapplying every 90 minutes to two hours to guarantee you stay safe in the sun throughout the day."

## 4.

**MYTH: The SPF in my make-up will be protection enough for my face.**

**FACT:** It won't. "Research shows that we apply around a sixth of the foundation that would be required to give us the level of protection promised by its sun-protection rating," says Bunting. "After all, we apply foundation and powder for aesthetic reasons, not to provide protection." So, unless you're happy to apply six teaspoons' of foundation, and reapply it throughout the day, the only way to stay protected is to wear a layer of sunscreen under your make-up.

## 5.

**MYTH: I'll only need half a bottle of sunscreen for a week's holiday.**

**FACT:** You should be getting through five bottles of sunscreen in a week's holiday. "Labs test sunscreens at 2mg per square centimetre of skin. If you don't apply this much, you simply won't be getting the protection promised on the bottle," says Bunting. "This equates to 5ml, or a generous teaspoonful to cover the face, and 30ml, or two generous tablespoons, to cover the body. The average bottle of >