

BY MARIA MASTERS



## SUN SMARTS

Yet another hurdle to keeping your child safe this summer: The majority of teens believe people with tans are more attractive. Protect your kid's skin by making sure she avoids these three common mistakes.

### GETTING A "BASE TAN"

Your teen might think getting a glow from a tanning salon prevents sunburns later on—and

therefore is safer. But while burns increase her risk of skin cancer, so does regular sun exposure. "A tan is a

sign of sun damage," says dermatologist Ali Hendi, M.D. "It's the body's way of trying to repair the DNA that was harmed by ultraviolet radiation." Spray tans do no harm but don't prevent her from being burned.

### SKIPPING SUNSCREEN

Chances are your child needs to be more diligent about applying—and reapplying—sunscreen. Try a spray, which kids often prefer, says Adelle Quintana, M.D., spokesperson for the Skin Cancer Foundation. Have her spritz the sunscreen on her hand before applying it to her face. And make sure she knows to close her eyes and mouth before spraying it on her body. "Kids need about 1 ounce for every two hours they're outside," she says.

### WEARING THE WRONG CLOTHING

Not all beach apparel is created equal. White cotton T-shirts range from an Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF, indicating how effective fabrics are at blocking UV rays) of 3 to 7, which isn't sufficient, says Dr. Quintana. Buy sun-protective clothing with a UPF of 30 or higher. Coolibar and Columbia Sportswear are recommended by the Skin Cancer Foundation.

## Q&A

### IS IT OKAY FOR MY SON TO BE ON HIS LAPTOP RIGHT UP UNTIL BEDTIME?

*The computer should be put to bed about two hours before he goes to sleep, says Nanci Yuan, M.D., a clinical associate professor at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. Research shows that kids who use electronics up until bedtime take longer to fall asleep at night. "These devices emit blue light, which signals the brain to stay awake," she says. Instead, your son should unwind with a calming book or music.*

3,387



That's how many milligrams (mg) of sodium the average child between the ages of 8 and 18 consumes daily—about 1,000 mg above the recommended limit. In a new study, excess salt consumption was associated with higher blood pressure in kids, which may raise their risk of heart disease later on.