

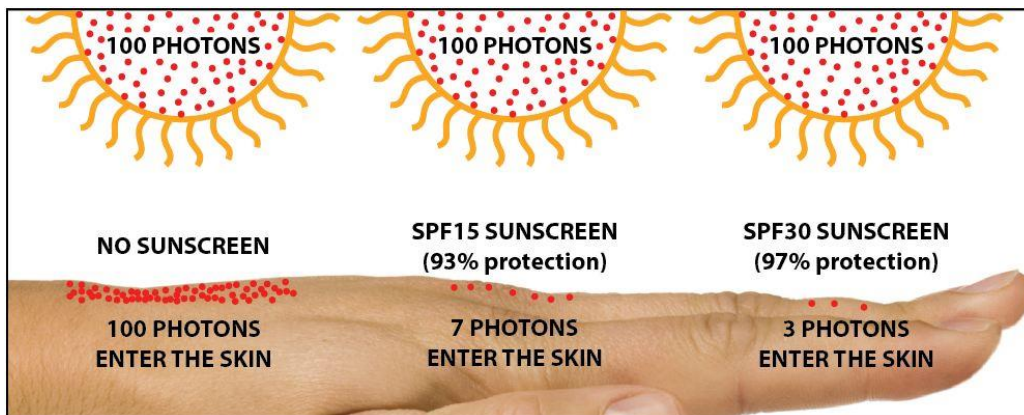
Sunscreen

Try It Out

Take a look at the piece of black construction paper. (Well, it started out as black.) What do you notice about the two different halves? If it's the beginning of the month, come back again to see if anything has changed by the end of the month.

What's going on?

One half of the paper has had sunscreen applied to a circle in the middle. The other half has had no sunscreen applied. A **chromophore** is a molecule which absorbs light at a particular wavelength and emits color as a result. The Ultraviolet (UV) light in sunlight is very effective at breaking down these chromophores in paper, resulting in the color fading from the paper. Sunscreen helps prevent the UV light from reaching the paper, by blocking the UV rays, or absorbing them.



Example of the protection afforded by different SPF sunscreens. (Image: moyoway.com)

What's the big deal?

The same UV rays that fade the paper also negatively affect our skin. Too much UV radiation from the sun can damage DNA in your skin cells and cause skin cancer. That's why it is so important to wear sunscreen.

Wonder While You Walk...

Should you wear sunscreen while you are riding in a car for a long time?