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Five Places You're Probably Forgetting to Wear Sunscreen

Stay protected with tips from dermatologist Emmy Graber.

By Jamie Ducharme | Boston Wellness | May 10, 2017, 11:52 a.m.

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Applying sunscreen seems so simple, but it can actually be deceptively complicated. And we're not even talking about choosing the right brand or SPF—we mean actually putting the stuff on your skin.

Even if you've got the basics down pat—roughly a shot glass' worth to cover your body, reapplying every couple hours, and so on—Dr. Emmy Graber, president of the Dermatology Institute of Boston, says you're probably missing five key areas.

“People often miss applying to their **scalp, backs of hands, tops of feet, tops of ears, and lips**,” Graber explains. “Sometimes it only takes one bad sunburn in these areas so that people remember going forward.”

To hit your whole body, including oft-forgotten areas like hands, feet, and ears, apply your sunscreen before getting dressed and ready. That way, you won't skimp on coverage to avoid getting the stuff on your clothes or hair. (Graber also recommends applying before putting on your bathing suit at the beach.)

That gets your body under control—but what about the scalp and lips?

“I almost never suggest aerosol-based sunscreens because they blow away in the wind and people miss spots,” Graber says. “But sometimes they can be helpful in getting sunscreen on the scalp without making the hair look super greasy.” Spray the product directly onto your part line, or areas of the scalp where hair is thin.

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When it comes to lips, she recommends picking a lip balm formulated with SPF.

Of course, these tips won't mean much if you're forgetting to wear sunscreen in the first place. To make it part of your daily routine, Graber recommends making sun protection visible. Keep a small bottle of sunscreen in your purse, or in plain sight on your bathroom counter.

Finally, choose a formula that works for you. Graber says many people prefer foams or fluids to traditional creams and sprays. Once you find a fit, stick with it—because the best sunscreen is the one you'll actually wear.
