

What Is Skin?

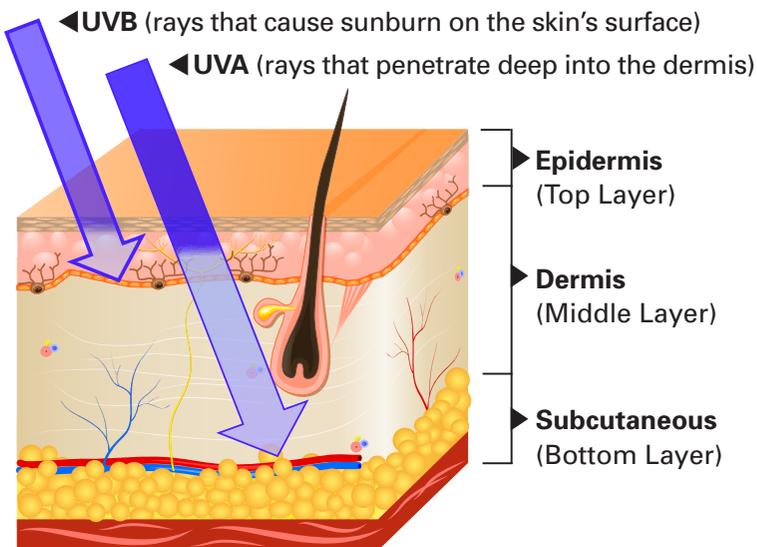
Skin has a big job. It's your body's largest organ. It protects your body. It keeps germs and dirt from getting inside your body. It keeps you cool and warm. And it has nerves that help you feel.

There are millions of skin cells on your body. Did you know that you lose thousands and thousands of skin cells every day? The good news is that your skin grows back quickly.

Exploring Skin's Layers

Skin has three layers.

- 1. Epidermis**—New skin cells are made here. It is also where melanin is made. Melanin is what gives skin its color.
- 2. Dermis**—It has nerves that help you feel sensations. It's also where sweat, oil, and goose bumps are made. It helps bring blood to your skin. It is also where hairs start.
- 3. Subcutaneous**—It connects the dermis to your muscles and bones and stores fat to help protect them from bumps and falls. It helps your blood vessels and nerve cells reach the rest of your body. This layer helps keep your body from getting too hot or cold.



Protecting Your Skin

Whenever you go outside, your skin is exposed to the sun. The sun has ultraviolet (UV) rays that can burn and hurt your skin. You can help protect your skin from UV rays with important sun safety habits:

- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 1–2 hours and after swimming or sweating. Spread sunscreen generously and evenly from head to toe. Don't forget your nose, ears, neck, hands, and feet. Make sure your sunscreen protects against UVA and UVB rays.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat. It will protect your face, head, ears, and neck more than a baseball cap.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes. Make sure they are UV protective. Check the label to ensure they block 99–100% of UV rays.
- Wear clothes that cover your skin, like long sleeves, long shorts, pants, and socks and shoes.
- Find shade outside to play in.
- Be extra protected between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are most harmful.