

What to Do if Your Lips Get Sunburned, According to Dermatologists

MAY 19, 2023



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[Sunburns](#) can occur anywhere on the body, from your scalp and shoulders to your legs

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Can Your Lips Get Sunburned?

As mentioned above, your lips can absolutely get sunburned just like the rest of your skin. That's why it's so important to make sure you are protecting all of your skin that is exposed to the sun when you go outside, including that of your lips. "Like any other area of your body, when left exposed to the sun long enough, your lips can get burnt," says Dr. Marmur. "For some people, their lips are more sensitive than other areas of their bodies, so taking extra care and caution is always a good idea."

According to Dr. Marmur, your bottom lip is especially susceptible to sunburn "due to the fact that lower lips are usually larger and fuller than the upper lip."

Can Sunburned Lips Be Worse Than Other Sunburns?

According to Dr. Markowitz, sunburned lips can be even worse than other areas of sunburn on the body. "Lips have almost no melanin to protect them, and the epidermis is thinner on the lips generally," she says. "This increases your chances of sunburn because [your lips] are more susceptible to damage from UV rays."

She also says that because the lips have so many vessels and nerve endings, UV rays irritating the lips usually leads to swelling and discomfort. Additionally, lip sunburns can trigger blistering rashes, says Dr. Marmur, and these blisters have the potential to scar.

How Do You Know If Your Lips Are Sunburned?

"Lip sunburns tend to make the lip swell and become more sensitive, which dries them out," says Dr. Markowitz. Dr. Marmur echoes this, noting that a lip sunburn may start by showing similar signs to sunburns anywhere else on your skin, but your lips are ultimately much more sensitive. "Your lips may appear redder than a usual sunburn, dry, fissured, swollen or even blistering," she says.

How to Treat Sunburned Lips

A [mild sunburn](#) will take about 48 hours to resolve, but a severe sunburn with blistering can take up to two weeks to heal. With deeper burns, you also have an increased risk of infection, Dr. Markowitz notes. If you think your burn falls into the latter category, it's imperative that you make an appointment with your dermatologist.

For mild lip sunburns, Dr. Markowitz recommends applying 1% hydrocortisone ointment three times a day for two days. "You can even refrigerate your hydrocortisone for a cooling effect," she says.

"Taking aspirin, anti-inflammatories and even multivitamins can help reduce any swelling or inflammation you may experience," adds Dr. Marmur. "Topical ingredients such as aloe can be applied and help reduce inflammation and redness, too."

Ultimately, however, Dr. Marmur emphasizes that prevention is the best way to treat sunburned lips. If you have any questions about how to treat your sunburn, reach out to your dermatologist or healthcare provider.

What Should You Avoid Doing If You Have a Lip Sunburn?

If you have a sunburn on your lips, stay away from additional sun exposure because the area is now very sensitive and prone to more damage. "Spicy or salty foods are also to be avoided, because they can cause further irritation and drying," says Dr. Markowitz.

You'll also want to be more careful about the ingredients you're putting on your skin. "You should avoid any harsh or minty lip balms and ingredients," says Dr. Marmur. "Also, if you are experiencing blistering, you should refrain from popping them and definitely ask your dermatologist to see you."

How Can You Prevent Lip Sunburns?

To help avoid sun damage to your lips in the first place, it's important to apply and reapply SPF every single day and take other sun protection measures.

"Use a dedicated lip balm with SPF as part of your morning routine," says Dr. Markowitz. With your SPF lip balm, be sure that you're frequently reapplying it throughout the day (even more often than you reapply regular sunscreen) because drinking and eating can cause the lip balm to fade faster. For the area surrounding your lips, try a soothing sunscreen stick with ceramides and hyaluronic acid, like the [CeraVe Mineral Sunscreen Stick with SPF 50](#).

SPF is not the only measure you can take to protect your lips from the sun's damaging rays. "Use multimodal protection such as SPF, makeup, wear a wide brimmed hat and zinc," says Dr. Marmur. "Being on the snow or water is even worse because the UV rays reflect off the water like a mirror and hit your lips." If you're planning to spend time in or near the water this summer (or you like to ski during the winter), be sure to keep this in

mind so you can step up your sun protection.

Our Favorite Face Sunscreens and Lip Balms

[CeraVe Mineral Sunscreen Stick with SPF 50](#)

A sunscreen stick like the CeraVe Mineral Sunscreen Stick with SPF 50 is an easy and effective way to protect your face (including the skin around your lips) from UV damage. This 100% mineral sunscreen contains titanium dioxide and zinc oxide, keeping your skin safe from sunburn as well as premature signs of aging. This is one of our favorite sunscreens for summer because it's water-resistant for up to 40 minutes, so you can splash in the waves worry-free.

La Roche-Posay Anthelios Ultra Light Fluid Facial Sunscreen SPF 60

Your search for a super lightweight, non-greasy face sunscreen is over. Try the La Roche-Posay Anthelios Ultra Light Fluid Facial Sunscreen SPF 60 for a sunscreen that offers serious sun protection, a natural-looking matte finish and a barely-there feel on the skin. This is a perfect everyday sunscreen to protect the skin on your face and around your lips because it doesn't leave a white cast, absorbs quickly and makes a suitable base for makeup application.

SkinCeuticals Physical Fusion UV Defense SPF 50

For a tinted sunscreen option, we like the SkinCeuticals Physical Fusion UV Defense SPF 50. You'll love how the sheer fluid formula gives your complexion a radiant, lit-from-within glow. It's water-resistant for up to 40 minutes and adapts to match most skin tones without leaving a white cast.

Kiehl's Buttermask for Lips

If your lips are feeling chapped and dry after a day in the sun, use a soothing, hydrating

overnight lip mask such as the Kiehl's Buttermask for Lips. Suitable for all skin types including sensitive skin, this intensely nourishing balm visibly restores dryness to give you soft, supple lips. It's formulated with hydrating coconut oil and wild mango butter.

[La Roche-Posay Nutritic Lip Balm](#)

Another one of our go-to lip balms for sensitive skin, the La Roche-Posay Nutritic Lip Balm soothes, moisturizes and softens extremely dry lips. The formula contains ceramides to help maintain your [skin barrier](#), shea butter to soothe, glycerin to help your skin absorb water and feel hydrated and vitamin E to neutralize damage from [free radicals](#). Plus, it comes in a stick form so application is easy and mess-free.

Sun Bum Original SPF 30 Sunscreen Lip Balm

An SPF lip balm is a must when it comes to protecting your lips from the sun. We like the Sun Bum Original SPF 30 Sunscreen Lip Balm because it offers sun protection and is infused with ingredients like aloe and vitamin E to soothe irritated skin. Plus, it comes in a variety of fruity flavors including coconut, banana, pineapple, key lime and watermelon.

Supergoop! Lip Shield SPF 30

You can say goodbye to cracked, dehydrated lips with this lip-balm-sunscreen hybrid. Formulated with antioxidant-rich coconut, avocado and grape seed oil, the Supergoop! Lip Shield SPF 30 offers water- and sweat-resistant sun protection for up to 80 minutes. It comes in three flavors — mint, strawberry and coconut. We also love how it's sold in a three-pack, so you don't have to replenish your supply as often throughout the summer.

EltaMD UV Lip Balm Broad-Spectrum SPF 36

Looking for a creamy, moisturizing sunscreen for your lips? Try the EltaMD UV Lip Balm Broad-Spectrum SPF 36. Not only does it provide UVA and UVB sun protection, it soothes and nourishes irritated lips at the same time. Vitamin C and vitamin E in the formula also work to reduce damage from free radicals that contribute to visible signs of aging. Since it's water-resistant for 80 minutes, this is a great lip balm to stash in your beach bag.

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