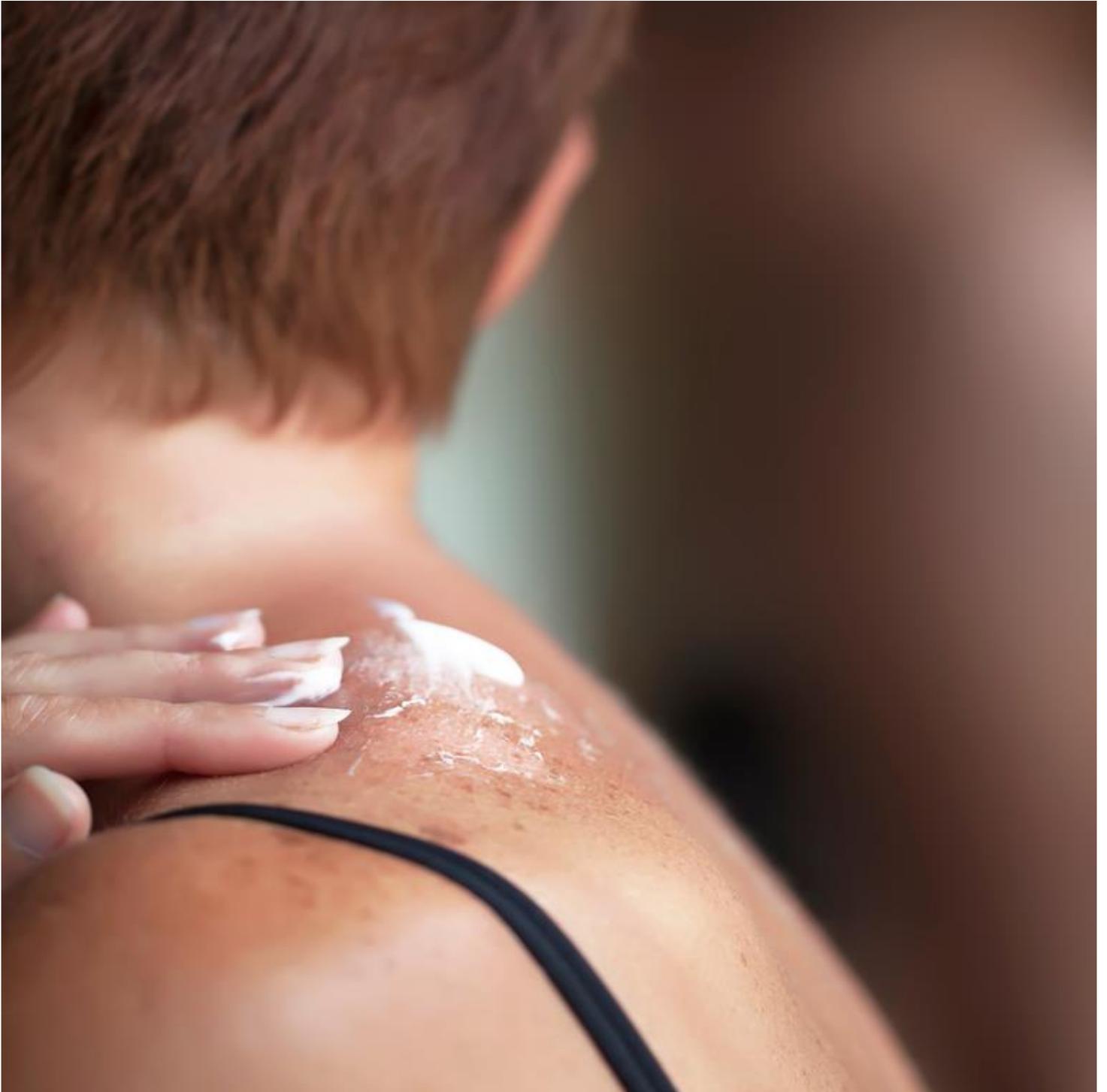


# How to Get Rid of Sunburn Blisters Safely, According to Dermatologists

Whatever you do, please do not pop it.



By [Korin Miller](#) Jun 15, 2020



A sunburn on its own can feel awful enough, but if it gets *really* bad, your skin can also develop uncomfortable blisters. According to the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), blistering skin is an indication of second-degree burn, so you want to treat the area with special care.

“Sun blisters develop when the skin becomes so inflamed that connections between skin cells become disrupted,” says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. “This leads to splitting of the skin, which ultimately fills with serous fluid.”

These blisters don’t exactly look or feel great, especially because you’re already dealing with red, painful, swollen, and even peeling skin. Plus, they’re a sign that significant damage has been done: Just one blistering sunburn as a kid or teen more than doubles your chances of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, later in life, per the Skin Cancer Foundation.

To heal your skin properly (and protect it from future harm), we asked dermatologists to share their pro tips on how to treat a sun blister safely.

## First, should you pop a sunburn blister?

While it’s tempting to pop those fluid-filled pockets, it’s definitely not the best idea. The blisters are there to help your skin heal and to protect you from infection, so if you pop them, you could compromise both. “Think of the top of the blister like nature’s Band-Aid, protecting the raw skin underneath,” Dr. Zeichner says.

That means you should “absolutely not” pop a sun blister, even if you really, really want to, says **Gary Goldenberg, M.D.**, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. “Blisters should be allowed to drain and pop by themselves,” he says.



## How to treat and heal sunburn blisters safely

It can take up to two weeks for sunburn blisters to heal, Dr. Goldenberg says, but there are a few steps you can take to give your skin a bit of extra love:

### ***1. Drink lots of water.***

When you have a sunburn, your body shuttles water from other areas to your skin, per the AAD. Chugging plenty of H<sub>2</sub>O can move the process along and will prevent dehydration.

### ***2. Cover the blister up.***

If you just have a few blisters, Dr. Zeichner recommends covering them with a bandage to avoid accidentally traumatizing them. “They will heal all on their own in the overwhelming majority of cases,” he says. It’s also a good idea to cover the area when you go outside. Wear tightly-woven fabrics (like soft cotton) for max protection and comfort, the AAD says.

### ***3. Keep it cold.***

Applying ice (make sure it’s wrapped in something!) to the area can help reduce swelling and pain, Dr. Goldenberg says. Cold, damp compresses will offer similar relief.

#### ***4. Moisturize like crazy.***

Keeping your blister covered is crucial, but you still need to treat the surrounding burn with care. Avoid hot showers (opt for cool baths if you can) and use gentle, hydrating soaps like Dove Deep Moisture Body Wash. After, slather on a basic body lotion (like Vaseline Clinical Care Extremely Dry Rescue Lotion) or aloe vera gel while the skin is slightly damp.

#### ***5. Apply a steroid cream.***

A topical steroid cream like 1% hydrocortisone can help relieve any itching and keep inflammation under control, Dr. Goldenberg says.

#### ***6. Take OTC pain meds if you need to.***

This won't necessarily speed up the blister healing process, but taking aspirin or ibuprofen may help reduce swelling, redness, and pain if you're super uncomfortable, the AAD says.

#### ***7. Monitor it carefully if it pops.***

If a blister does pop open, very carefully clean the area with gentle soap and water. Apply antibiotic ointment and cover the exposed skin with nonstick gauze or a bandage. Keep a close eye on it: If a rash forms or it starts to feel worse, see your doctor ASAP.

### **How to prevent a sunburn blister**

Once your sunburn blister heals, your skin may be even more vulnerable to UV damage. The only way to truly prevent a sunburn (and the painful blisters that can come with one) is to apply sunscreen regularly:

- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.
- Apply at least 1 ounce (a shot glass-sized amount) of sunscreen to your whole body. Lotions, compared to sticks or sprays, are the easiest to rub in generously.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours or after swimming or sweating.

These dermatologist-approved options are a good place to start:



**Eltamd UV Clear  
Facial Sunscreen  
Broad-Spectrum  
SPF 46**

amazon.com  
\$36.00

**SHOP NOW**



**Neutrogena  
Ultra Sheer Dry-  
Touch Sunscreen  
SPF 70**

walmart.com  
\$8.97

**SHOP NOW**



**Blue Lizard  
Australian  
Sunscreen,  
Sensitive SPF 30+**

amazon.com  
\$13.80

**SHOP NOW**



**MDSolarSciences  
Mineral Moisture  
Defense SPF 50**

amazon.com  
\$31.18

**SHOP NOW**