

# You didn't use sunscreen and now you're a lobster. Here's 6 ways to heal that sunburn.

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Last week, NJ Advance Media published a report [all about sunscreen](#): when to put it on, how much to apply, how high SPF you should use.

But you didn't listen. Correction, I didn't listen. I hit the beach over the weekend, used just a dab of sunblock (to avoid being too greasy), and was ultimately left with the [agonizing sting of a wicked sunburn](#).

So, what do you do if you [end up looking like a lobster](#), like I did?

Here's what you need to know to heal that sunburn fast.

Your skin's hot. Therefore, cold equals good. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends using a cold compress 10 to 15 minutes every day when you have a sunburn to “take some of the heat out of your skin,” according to its website. It also recommends taking cool baths or showers to alleviate pain.

## 2. Colloidal oatmeal baths

What is a colloidal oatmeal baths? No, it's not the stuff you eat for breakfast. Colloidal oatmeal creates a soothing, milky bath, which helps soothe your skin. It also gives your skin temporary protection and [helps relieve itching, dryness and inflammation](#).



### 3. Use pain relievers, anti-inflammatory drugs

Over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen (Advil) can help [alleviate some of the pain](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also suggests using topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, like Tropicin and Flexall, which may help [ease the suffering](#).

Sunburns can make you itch like crazy. If this is what you're experiencing, the CDC says products like Benadryl can alleviate this discomfort.

### 5. Stay hydrated

One of the most important and simple remedies is staying hydrated. You should also try your best to stay cool and in a shaded or indoor environment.

### 6. Use aloe

"Put aloe on it." You've probably heard that a million times from someone when you've gotten burned badly by the sun. But does it really work? Sort of.

It's not the miracle treatment that some make it out to be.

Dr. Rebecca Baxt, a dermatologist with [Zwivel.com](#) who is based in Bergen County, said it's merely a soothing agent.

"But you can just as easily use a cold compress," Baxt said.

What about topical steroids?

While topical steroids like corticosteroid creams are sometimes recommended, studies have found that they are ineffective in alleviating pain, according to the CDC.

If blisters develop, leave them alone. Messing with them will only delay healing.

If you've been burned so badly that you have open erosions, the CDC says they should be "coated with petroleum jelly and covered with sterile gauze to decrease the risk of infection."

How long does it take to get a sunburn?

Sunburns are sneaky. While it can take only 10 or 15 minutes to get one, it can take four or even six hours for you to realize just how screwed you are when symptoms begin to set in. Symptoms often then worsen within 24 to 36 hours after exposure.