

SUN AWARENESS

The hot weather has arrived which means more time outdoors for lots of us.

Whether you're at an outdoor event, taking a staycation or going abroad it's important to remain aware of how to keep safe in the sun.

There're a million reasons why the sun is good for us through sustaining life and our world, in fact without it we wouldn't be here. But one thing it's not always good for is our skin. Our skin is one of the most important organs of our body and it's important to protect it.

People who've been exposed to too much sun can get painful burns known as sunburn, which can increase the risk of skin cancer, but it's not just those big days at the beach that can cause this type of damage. Each time you walk the dog, commute to work or take a break outdoors without sun protection can add to the damage that can lead to skin cancer as well as early ageing.

So how can you stay safe in the sun?

There are lots of things you can do to stay safe in the sun and whilst we can't list them all, here are some of our top sun safety tips.

Consider your sun protection factor (SPF)

The SPF will tell you how long you'll be protected for as well as telling you how long the sun's rays would take to redden your skin when using a particular sunscreen compared with the amount of time without sunscreen. So if you use an SPF 15 product exactly as directed (applied generously and evenly, and reapplied after two hours or after sweating or swimming), it would take you 15 times longer to burn than if you weren't wearing sunscreen.

Wear sunscreen

A sunscreen is a substance applied to the skin to reduce the intensity of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays entering the skin and damaging vulnerable skin cells. Sunscreen can take many forms including creams, milks, lotions, gels, foams, oils, ointments, and sprays. It also contains lots of different information such as letters and numbers, but it's important to know what these different things mean.

Here's a breakdown of the things you can consider when choosing your sunscreen.

On sunny, hot days or when taking part in an extended outdoor activity such as long distance running or swimming, it is advised to use a 'high protection' sunscreen of at least SPF 30 which also has high UVA protection.

If it's an overcast day or you're doing an activity with occasional sun exposure, SPF 15 is often recommended.

Opt for a broad-spectrum sunscreen. Some sunscreens only offer UVA or UVB protection, but broad-spectrum means that you're protected from both types of radiation.

UVA – Think AGEING. These rays have a much longer wavelength, with the ability to penetrate deeper into the skin. This causes skin ageing by breaking down elastin collagen.

UVB – Think BURNING. These rays have a much shorter wavelength that does not penetrate as deeply but is associated with skin burning.

If you struggle with sensitive skin look out for products containing zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, sometimes referred to as mineral or physical formulas, as they may be less likely to cause skin irritation in people who have sensitive skin.

Darker skin tones have more of a pigment called melanin than lighter skin tones. While dark skin is slightly more protected, it can burn just like light skin, so whatever colour skin you have, make sure to apply sunscreen.

While sunscreens can't claim to be waterproof, they can be labelled water resistant for either 40 or 80 minutes. Reapplying is key!

Sunscreens offer great protection but remember to reapply them often – every two hours – to ensure they work.

Sunscreens should not be used as an alternative to clothing and shade, rather they offer additional protection. No sunscreen will provide 100% protection.

Consider your clothing

Ultra violet light is a type of radiation that the sun gives out that damages our skin. So, whilst it's important to wear sunscreen, loose clothing, a hat and sunglasses are also great ways to protect yourself from these rays too.

So lets start at the top and wear a hat.

What to look for in a hat?

The best hats for sun protection have a brim of at least 3 inches to shade the face, scalp, neck, shoulders and upper back, along with easily overlooked places like the top of the ears and the back of the neck.

Also look for a tightly woven hat rather than a loosely constructed straw hat that lets in UV rays.

What makes clothing Sun Safe?

Loose-fitting clothing is preferable. Tight clothing can stretch and reduce the level of protection offered, as the fibres pull away from each other and allow more UV light to pass through.

Dark or bright colours keep UV rays from reaching your skin by absorbing them rather than allowing them to penetrate. That's why these colours offer better protection than lighter shades.

Densely woven cloth, like denim, canvas, wool or synthetic fibres, are more protective than sheer, thin or loosely woven cloth. Check a fabric's sun safety by holding it up to the light. If you can see through, UV radiation can easily penetrate the fabric and reach your skin.

The more skin your outfit covers, the better your protection. Whenever possible, choose long-sleeved shirts and long pants or skirts.

Regardless of ultraviolet protection factor (UPF), if your clothing gets stretched or wet, it will lose some of its protective ability and become more transparent, exposing your skin to more UV light.

Wear sunglasses - UV radiation can also damage the eyes, and so sunglasses with good quality lenses that filter out the UV are essential. Those with an EU CE Mark are proven to offer safe protection.

Early detection

Using sun protection consistently from an early age is the strongest defence against developing skin cancer. But early detection of skin cancer is vital and can reduce a patient's risk to more serious symptoms developing.

The Skin Cancer Foundation recommend that you check your skin head-to-toe once a month.

If you notice anything new, changing or unusual get it checked by your doctor or a dermatologist immediately.

Changes include:

A growth that increases in size and appears pearly, transparent, tan, brown, black or multicoloured.

A mole, birthmark or brown spot that increases in size, thickness, changes colour or texture, or is bigger than a pencil eraser.

A spot or sore that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab or bleed.

An open sore that does not heal within 3 weeks.

Learn more about early detection at TheBigSee.org.

Keep in mind whilst it's good to be aware, you know your body best. If you notice anything that's unusual for you, or won't go away, make an appointment to speak to your doctor.

To help support your wellbeing and time, we provide regular health assessments and access to our digital Virtual GP service for all colleagues at Carnival UK.

[Click here](#) to find out more about your health benefits in the My Benefits booklet.

How do I perform a self-examination to detect skin cancer?

1 Examine your face
Especially your nose, lips, mouth and ears — front and back. Use one or both mirrors to get a clear view.

2 Inspect your scalp
Thoroughly inspect your scalp, using a blow-dryer and mirror to expose each section to view. Get a friend or family member to help, if you can.

3 Inspect your torso
Next, focus on the neck, chest and torso. Lift the breasts to view the undersides.

4 Scan your arms
Standing in front of the full-length mirror, begin at the elbows and scan all sides of your upper arms. Don't forget the underarms.

5 Scan your lower back
Still using both mirrors, scan your lower back, buttocks and backs of both legs.

6 Scan your upper back
With your back to the full-length mirror, use the hand mirror to inspect the back of your neck, shoulders, upper back and any part of the back of your upper arms you could not view in step 4.

7 Check your hands
Palms and backs, between the fingers and under the fingernails. Continue up the wrists to examine both the front and back of your forearms.

8 Inspect your legs
Sit down; prop each leg in turn on the other stool or chair. Use the hand mirror and sides of both legs, thigh to shin. Then, finish with ankles and feet, including soles, toes and nails (without polish).

A thorough self-exam requires the following simple supplies: a bright light, a full-length mirror, a hand mirror, two chairs or stools and a blow-dryer. Be sure to document your findings by writing them down, or use your phone to take pictures.

How else can I stay safe in the Sun?

Make it a way of life. Protect yourself every day, even when it's cloudy.

Avoid the sun between 11:00 and 15:00 - this is when it's at its hottest.

Apply sunscreen liberally to exposed sites 15 to 30 minutes before going out into the sun to ensure maximum protection.

Reapply sunscreen every 2hrs or after swimming or sweating.

Avoid indoor tanning such as sun beds.

Always pick a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15.

Use a water-resistant sunscreen when engaging in extended outdoor activity.

Consider mineral based sunscreen products if you suffer from sensitive skin.

Wear a wide hat.

When picking new sunglasses, consider styles that wrap around as they do not allow sun in at the sides.

Pick clothes that offer the most effective sun protection.

Keep an eye on your moles to look out for any unusual changes.

Be SunSmart

To help us remain SunSmart it's important to know the facts.

UVA can penetrate windows and cloud cover whereas UVB rays can be filtered and do not penetrate glass.

Skin cancer rates are rising in middle-aged men faster than in any other group, largely due to doing outdoor activities without wearing a shirt or sunscreen.

Men are more likely than women to develop skin cancers, or melanomas, on their chest or back – places they can't easily check themselves until melanomas become more serious.

A white T-shirt provides only moderate sun protection, with a UPF of about 7. When that T-shirt gets wet, it provides a UPF of only 3!

...more on sunlight and Vitamin D

Safe sunlight exposure can be good for us as well as being most people's source of Vitamin D. Vitamin D is vital throughout life to maintain healthy bones and when you don't get enough it can cause deficiencies in adults and children alike.

UK levels of vitamin D deficiency are high (particularly among people with darker skin and during the winter months) and there is evidence that this is a growing problem.

Many people in the UK get insufficient vitamin D. Research shows that regular, low levels of sunlight exposure can help alleviate the problems of vitamin D deficiency in the UK.

Researchers at the University of Manchester have been looking into the relationships between sunlight exposure and vitamin D. In simple terms, they have found that – for lighter skin types – daily sunlight exposure for 10-15 minutes between April and September provides sufficient year-round Vitamin D while also minimising the risks of sunburn and skin cancer. For darker skin types, 25-40 minutes is recommended.

Importantly, levels of sunlight exposure that make an individual's skin look pink or sunburnt – either during or some hours after exposure – are too high and should always be avoided. People with very light or sensitive skin and others who may not be able to follow this advice should seek further guidance from their doctor about alternative sources of vitamin D. For more information visit the University of Manchester research on sunlight and vitamin D [project page](#).

Need extra support?

Fleet: Visit the Medical Centre or contact your Crew Assistance Programme (CAP)

Shore: Speak to your GP, Occupational Health or your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)



Our **Mental Health First Aiders and Champions** can provide support and signpost you to additional help if and when you need it.

