

Skin cancer: Recommended lifestyle changes



Protect yourself against the sun

Sunscreen alone won't protect you against skin cancer. You want to combine sunscreen, proper clothing and common-sense avoidance of strong sun. Below are some ways to practice sun safety. Remember, if you're standing out from the crowd by standing in the shade, you're setting a good example for others.

Sunscreen lotion

- Always keep sunscreen in your desk or locker at work. Don't store sunscreen in hot places, because extreme heat may ruin the protective chemicals.
- Remember to check:
 - the expiration date
 - sun protection factor (SPF) strength (probably somewhere between 15-30 based on your country's recommendation)
 - number of stars
 - broad spectrum (which provides protection against both UVA and UVB damaging radiation)
- Cover all exposed parts of your body, including your hands, neck, back of neck and tops of your feet, if exposed. People often apply much less sunscreen than they should for effective protection.
 - About 2 teaspoonful of sunscreen to cover your head, arms and neck
 - About 2.5 tablespoonful to cover your entire body
- Remember to reapply sunscreen regularly. Even "once a day" and "water resistant" sunscreen should be reapplied for as long as you're out in the sun. One recommendation is every two hours. If you're swimming, reapply sunscreen after you get back in the pool, especially after you've dried yourself off with a towel.
- Don't think of sunscreen as a way of staying out in the sun longer. The longer you stay in the sun, the more likely you are to get a sunburn. Remember, burnt skin is damaged skin.

Scheduling activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try your best to avoid outdoor activities when the sun is strongest. This is usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.• Consider suggesting alternative hours to be outside to avoid peak sun exposure. If being outside during peak sun is inevitable, encourage others to use the proper sunscreen or protective clothing.• Don't feel awkward about taking a "shade break." Find some shade and get partial relief from the sun's rays. Encourage others to do the same.• If you know that you'll be out in an area without trees or other shelters, bring or request items that will provide shade, such as an umbrella or tent.
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn about the fabric of your clothes. The more you know about fabric weave and ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) protection, the more comfortably you can dress, even at the beach. A long-sleeved, tightly woven linen shirt can be just as effective as a heavy shirt.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tighter weaved fabric offers better protection against UV rays- Darker colors absorb more UV rays than lighter colors. Vivid colors can also protect better than a pale color. But a pale color in the right weave, material and weight can improve that protection.¹- Consider buying clothing, such as hats, sunglasses or cover-ups, that have been treated for sun protection. Check the labels to make sure that these garments are designated as sun-safe clothing and have a UPF rating.• Consider wearing:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A wide-brimmed hat with flaps around the ears and back of the neck to offer even better protection- Sunglasses to protect your eyes and the skin around your eyes. Yes, you can even get cancer of the eye.

Sources:

1. The Skin Cancer Foundation. Sun Protection, June 2021. Available from www.skincancer.org.

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