



# Sun Safety

## What Damage Occurs with UV?

The short-term results of unprotected exposure to UV rays are sunburn and tanning. Long-term exposure causes prematurely aged skin, wrinkles, loss of elasticity, dark patches and actual skin cancers.

## Who is in Most Danger from Sun Exposure?

You need to be especially careful in the sun if you:

- ✦ have numerous or irregular moles
- ✦ were previously treated for skin cancer
- ✦ work indoors all week and then get a tan on weekends
- ✦ have freckles and burn before tanning
- ✦ have fair skin; or blond, red, or light brown hair
- ✦ have a family history of skin cancer
- ✦ live or vacation at high altitudes
- ✦ spend a lot of time outdoors
- ✦ take certain medications (see prescription information)

## What are Long Term Effects of Sun Damage?

The American Cancer Society estimates more than 1 million new cases of highly curable basal and squamous cell cancers will be diagnosed this year. The most serious form of skin cancer is melanoma, which is diagnosed in more than 60,000 people each year and causes several thousand deaths.

## How Do I Protect Myself from UV?

It is impossible to completely avoid sunlight and it would be unwise to reduce your level of activity because you don't want to be outdoors. But there are precautions that you can take to limit your amount of exposure to UV.

### 1. Limit direct sun exposure during midday

Ultraviolet rays are most intense between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM. Limit outdoor activities during these times.

### 2. Cover up

Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible. Dark colors provide more protection than light colors and a tightly woven fabric provides greater protection than loosely woven clothing

### 3. Wear a hat

A hat with at least a 2 to 3-inch brim all around is ideal because it protects areas often exposed to the sun, such as the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.

### 4. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher

Experts recommend products with an SPF of at least 15. An SPF 4 blocks out 75% of the burning UV rays while an SPF 15 blocks out 93% of the burning UV rays.

### 5. Wear sunglasses that block UV rays

The ideal sunglasses should block 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB radiation. Check the label to be sure they do.

### 6. Avoid sunlamps and tanning booths

Many people believe that the UV rays of tanning beds are harmless, but tanning lamps emit UVA and frequently emit UVB also. Both cause skin damage, and contribute to skin cancers.

### 7. Check your skin regularly

Examine your skin after a shower or bath. Signs to look for are changes in size, texture, shape, and color of blemishes or a sore that does not heal. If you find any changes, see your doctor or health care provider.



Source: American Cancer Society Website

