

# PHC

## Fun in the Sun – Sun Safety



We all need some sun exposure. Too much unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause skin damage, eye damage, immune system suppression, and skin cancer. Even people in their twenties can develop skin cancer.

The sun radiates light to the earth, and part of that light consists of invisible UV rays. When these rays reach the skin, they cause tanning, burning, and other skin damage.

- UVA rays cause skin aging and wrinkling and contribute to skin cancer, such as melanoma (the most dangerous form of skin cancer).
- UVB rays are also dangerous, causing sunburns, cataracts (clouding of the eye lens), and effects on the immune system.

UV rays react with a chemical called melanin that's found in skin. A sunburn develops when the amount of UV exposure is greater than what can be protected against by the skin's melanin. The risk of damage increases with the amount and intensity of exposure.

### Staying Safe in the Sun (Slip, Slop, Slap, Slide, Wrap)



- **Slip on a Shirt**

Slip on a shirt with long sleeves. Fabrics with a tighter weave and darker colours will give you better protection from the sun. Although white clothing doesn't absorb the sun's heat as it reflects it back, it also reflects our own body heat back on to the skin, therefore making us feel hotter. Dark clothing does absorb the sun's energy

but it also absorbs our body energy. The trick is to choose clothing which is the same thickness and looseness as the lighter summery clothing!

- **Slop on Sunscreen**

When buying sunscreen, the label should have: a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 to protect against UVB and at least four-star UVA protection. Most people don't apply enough sunscreen. As a guide, adults should aim to apply around:

- two teaspoons of sunscreen if you're just covering your head, arms and neck
- two tablespoons if you're covering your entire body while wearing a swimming costume

If sunscreen is applied too thinly, the amount of protection it gives is reduced. Sunscreen needs to be reapplied liberally and frequently, and according to the manufacturer's instructions. If you plan to be out in the sun long enough to risk burning, sunscreen needs to be applied twice:

- 30 minutes before going out
- just before going out

- **Slap on a hat**

Wear a hat with a wide brim or a cap with flaps. More people are sunburnt on the face and neck than any other part of the body.

- **Slide into the Shade**

Spend time in the shade when the sun is strongest. In the UK, this is between 11am and 3pm from March to October. Plan your outdoor activities for early or later in the day when the sun's UV levels are lower.

- **Wrap around Sunglasses**

Choose close fitting, wrap around style sunglasses. Not all sunglasses protect against UV radiation, so always check the label for the sun protection rating.

### **Be Aware!**



You can be sunburnt on cool or cloudy days. UV rays can travel through clouds, so overcast and even rainy days can be deceiving! The UK sun can be as strong as it is abroad, especially between April and September. It's easy to underestimate how strong the sun is here.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.nivea.co.uk/advice/cancer-partners-uk-sun-safety-campaign>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/sunscreen-and-sun-safety/#sun-safety-tips>