

SUN PROTECTION

KEEP SUN SAFE AT WORK AND AT PLAY

Sun protection means protecting skin from the harmful effects of the sun. Everyone needs to protect their skin. UVA and UVB rays, the two types of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun that reach the earth's surface.

This radiation can cause health problems such as sunburn, skin ageing, eye damage and even skin cancer. Use a combination of the three main ways to protect yourself in the sun. Cover up by slipping on a shirt, slapping on a hat and sliding on sunglasses, wear sunscreen, and seek shade wherever and whenever you can.

COVER UP

Wearing a wide-brimmed hat can reduce the amount of UV radiation reaching your face.

Protect your skin by wearing long-sleeved tops and trousers. Choose close-weave materials that block out the most UV rays. If there's a chance you'll get wet, try sun protection factor (SPF) clothing and sunsuits as normal wet clothing stretches and lets more UV radiation through to your skin. Sunglasses help to protect your eyes and eyelids. Wraparound sunglasses also protect the skin around your eyes. Sunglasses can have different eye protection factor (EPF) labelling so go for category 2-4, UV 400 or EPF 9 or above to meet the Australian Standard for UV protection.

WEAR SUNSCREEN

Use a broad spectrum sunscreen that filters out both UVA and UVB rays. Make sure it has a SPF of 30+.

Sunscreens are generally very safe and you can use them generously when planning time out in the sun. Generally, apply about two teaspoons worth for your face, neck and arms; and two tablespoons for your whole body when wearing a swimsuit. Use it about 15-20 minutes before you head out and re-apply every two hours.

Remember UV rays scatter on reflective surfaces such as water and concrete, increasing your amount of UV exposure, so re-apply sunscreen more often if you go swimming or work outside. You may also need to apply sunscreen more frequently if you sweat a lot. If you develop an allergy to one sunscreen, try other brands and formulations to find another that works for you.

SUNSCREEN CHECKLIST

- 4 hours water resistant
- 30+ SPF
- Broad spectrum UVA & UVB protection
- Check the expiry and make sure it's in date
- Store below 30 degrees Celsius.

SEEK SHADE

Where possible, seek out shady areas under trees, and use umbrellas or canopies when outdoors.

Clouds won't stop the sun's UV rays getting through so protect yourself even if it's cloudy. Haze (from thin clouds or mist) can even increase your UV radiation exposure because the rays are scattered.

GET SOME VITAMIN D

Balance sun protection with maintaining healthy vitamin D levels. Sunlight provides much more bone-boosting vitamin D for people living in Australia than dietary supplementation. All it takes is 10 minutes a day of direct summer sun on your face and arms to maintain the level of vitamin D that is generally recommended. According to the Cancer Council, you can do this safely without sun protection in the morning or the late afternoon when the UV index is below 3.

To find out daily UV levels in your area and the times of the day that sun protection is required, check the weather pages of most newspapers. Or visit the Cancer Council website or download the free SunSmart app for smartphones.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Cancer Council Australia
www.cancer.org.au

Sources:

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