

Stay Safe by Cancer Research

Us parents and carers spend so much time and effort getting the best and safest pushchair and car seat and have all the safety equipment in the home such as stair gates, oven guards, plug protectors, cupboard and drawer catches yet when it comes to the safety of ourselves and children outside the home, somehow skin cancer is still one of the most common cancers in the UK and the numbers are increasing. These cancers could be prevented if only we protected ourselves and especially our babies and children.

FOR THE SAKE OF YOURSELF AND CHILDREN, PLEASE READ ON...I KNOW YOU THINK IT WON'T HAPPEN TO YOU...BUT IT MIGHT! (I don't mean to preach, but someone has to)!

About skin cancer

Most skin cancers are caused by damage from UV (ultraviolet) rays in sunlight. These cancers could be prevented if we protect ourselves from the sun.

A serious problem

- 🔗 There are over 70,000 new cases of skin cancer diagnosed each year in the UK
- 🔗 Many cases are not reported so the real number of cases is probably much higher
- 🔗 The number of cases has more than doubled since the early 80s
- 🔗 Over 2,000 people die from skin cancer each year in the UK

In fact, there are more skin cancer deaths in the UK than in Australia, even though Australia has more cases of the disease.












Children & Babies

Remember to take extra care with children

Young skin is delicate and very easily damaged by the sun. All children, no matter whether they tan easily or not, should be protected from the sun.

Children (like adults) with fair or red hair, pale eyes or freckles are at most risk. Keep babies under six months out of direct sunlight, especially around midday.

Ten tips for protecting children in the sun

-  **Remember you can burn in the UK**
The Great British sun is quite capable of burning your child! Take extra care at home as well as abroad.
-  **Know the shadow rule**
If your shadow is longer than you are, then you are safe from the sun. When your shadow is shorter than you are tall, the sun can burn you.
-  **Use shade**
Keep babies in complete shade: under trees, umbrellas, canopies or indoors.
-  **Cover them up**
Dress children in cotton clothing that is baggy, close-weave and cool. Oversized T-shirts are good for covering most of their skin.
-  **Use dry clothing**
Remember that wet clothing stretches and can lose up to half of its UV protection – put children in dry clothing after playing in water.
-  **Protect shoulders and necks**
Don't put children in vest tops or sundresses if they are spending a lot of time outdoors – shoulders and backs of necks get easily burned.
-  **Wear sunglasses**
Buy good quality, wraparound sunglasses for children, as soon as they can wear them. Sunglasses don't have to be expensive brands, but toy sunglasses can do more harm than good.
-  **Find hats they like**
Encourage children to wear hats with brims, especially if they are not wearing sunglasses. The wider the brim, the more skin will be shaded from the sun.
-  **Use sunscreen wisely**
Apply factor 15+ sunscreen before children go outdoors. Then reapply often to be sure of good coverage. Don't forget their shoulders, nose, ears, cheeks and tops of feet.
-  **Remember sunscreen washes off**
Always use waterproof sunscreen (factor 15+) when children are swimming or playing outdoors with water. Reapply after towelling.
-  **Don't forget school times**
Remember play times and lunch breaks on summer school days too. Give children a hat to wear and, if they can't apply sunscreen at school, cover their exposed skin with factor 15+ before they go.

SHADE

Remember, children spend much more time outside than adults do. By putting these tips into practice you will protect your children now **and** reduce their risk of developing skin cancer in the future.

Spend time in the shade between 11am and 3pm.

Over the summer months, one of the best ways to avoid the sun's harmful UV rays is to find shade under trees, umbrellas, canopies or indoors.

UV rays are invisible and cannot be felt on the skin. They penetrate deeply into our cells, causing changes that lead to sunburn, skin ageing, eye damage and skin cancer.

Why 11am-3pm?

The sun's UV rays are strongest in the hours around midday. This is why it's best to avoid the sun between 11am and 3pm if you can.

Other things that affect the amount of UV rays are the:

- 🕒 **time of year** - the highest risk months in the UK are May to September. In Australia, November to February are the danger months. Near the equator, there are strong UV rays all year round.
- 🕒 **altitude** - UV rays are stronger the higher you go. So skiers and mountaineers beware!
- 🕒 **cloud cover** - you can still burn on a day when there is thin or scattered cloud, but heavy cloud does offer protection.
- 🕒 **reflection** - up to 85 per cent of UV rays can be reflected back from snow, sand, cement and water.

Providing shade

Shade is particularly important for children. You can find or create shade in many different ways. For example:

- 🕒 trees and foliage
- 🕒 umbrellas and parasols
- 🕒 canopies and awnings
- 🕒 tents and shelters
- 🕒 wide-brimmed hats

Sunscreen

Then use factor 15+ sunscreen

There will always be times when we are out in the sun without adequate shade or cover-up clothing. This is when sunscreen is useful for protecting our exposed skin from the sun's rays. Sunscreen alone will not protect us completely from sun damage.

We should never use sunscreen in order to spend longer in the sun. It should be used to increase our protection.

Why factor 15+ sunscreen?

The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of a sunscreen is a measure of its ability to filter out dangerous UVB rays. The higher the factor the more protection you get from burning. But higher factor sunscreens tend to be more expensive.

The reason experts recommend factor 15, is that this represents the best balance between protection and price. You will get over 90 per cent protection from UVB rays with SPF 15. Above SPF 30 you don't get much additional protection from higher factors.

No sunscreen - no matter how high the factor - can offer 100 per cent protection.

What is broad spectrum?

Broad spectrum sunscreens block out UVA rays as well as UVB.

There is no international measurement of UVA protection. In the UK we use the 'star' system. This system compares the ratio of protection from UVA with the protection from UVB. It ranges from 0 stars to 5 stars.

Because it is a ratio, the number of stars a product has is not an absolute measure. For example, an SPF 25 with 3 stars may screen out more UVA overall than an SPF 10 with 4 stars.

Covering Up

Aim to cover up with a t-shirt, hat and sunglasses

When there's no shade around, the best way to protect your skin from the sun is with loose clothing, a wide-brimmed hat and good quality sunglasses.

What to look for

The more skin that is covered by your clothing, the better the protection. Look for materials with a close weave, as they will block out the most UV rays. Holding the material up to the light is a good way to see how much light and UV rays will get through. Natural fibres such as linen and cotton are cooler, especially if they are loose-fitting.

Be aware that when clothing gets wet it stretches and allows more UV rays through to your skin. A wet t-shirt may only offer half the protection of a dry one.

Don't forget your hat and sunglasses

Hats are great for protecting the face, eyes and head (especially if you happen to be thin on top!). A wide-brimmed hat can reduce the UV radiation reaching your face and eyes by over 50 per cent. Long term exposure of eyes to the sun increases your risk of skin cancer of the eyelids and around the eyes.

When choosing sunglasses look for one of the following:

- 👉 the 'CE Mark' and British Standard (BS EN 1836:1997)
- 👉 a UV 400 label
- 👉 a statement that the sunglasses offer 100% UV protection

Also, make sure that the glasses offer protection at the side of the eye. The wraparound style of glasses are popular in Australia where they know all about sun safety.

Buying sunscreen

Choose one:

- 👉 with an SPF of 15 or above - this will give you over 90% protection
- 👉 labelled 'broad spectrum' - to protect against UVA and UVB
- 👉 that is water resistant - it is less likely to wash or be sweated off
- 👉 with a valid 'use by' date - most sunscreens have a shelf life of 2-3 years
- 👉 you can afford - you don't have to pay for expensive brands. All types are tested and the cheaper brands are just as effective if used properly.

Tips for using sunscreen properly

- 👉 try to apply it 15-30 minutes before going out in the sun
- 👉 apply to clean, dry skin and rub in only lightly
- 👉 use generous amounts
- 👉 re-apply once outside to ensure even coverage
- 👉 then re-apply every 2 hours or more frequently if washed, rubbed or sweated off
- 👉 put on before make-up, moisturiser, insect repellent, and so on
- 👉 never use it to spend longer in the sun - this will put you at risk of sun damage that could lead to skin cancer.

For More Information On Staying Safe Please Go To:

www.cancerresearchuk.org/sunsmart

Or To Make A Donation Please Go To:

www.cancerresearchuk.org/donate

Thanks for readinghappy holidays.....

(Anne Stone, Founder of Little Pebbles)