

Surviving the Hot Summer Sun



Sun worshipers, beware. Just two decades ago, you had a 1 in 250 chance of developing melanoma, the most lethal form of skin cancer. Today, your odds are 1 in 41.

Here's how you can enjoy the summer and still protect yourself:

- Buy a sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and an SPF of 15 to 30. A sunscreen labeled "All Day" is your best choice. All Day means eight hours worth of protection. Apply one tablespoon to your face and neck, two to three tablespoons for your body. Put it on 30 minutes before exposure. If the label does not say "All Day," you must reapply every two or three hours.

The best protection against UVA rays are sunscreens that include zinc oxide, titanium dioxide or avobenzone.

Most sunscreens protect against both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) light. UVB is responsible for sunburn. UVA penetrates deeper into the

skin. Both contribute to melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer.

- Cover up with clothes. Polyester garments are usually more protective than cotton or linen, but it depends on the weight and the weave. (Sunlight gets through the holes.)

To determine if clothing will help provide sun block, hold a single layer of it up to the sun. If the sun shines through, it does not provide adequate protection.

- Wear a hat with a two-inch brim.

- Stay out of the sun completely between 10 am and 4 pm, or limit your time in the sun to an hour or two, but not at the worst time, 11 am to 3 pm.

- Don't trust the clouds or the shade. On cloudy days, ultraviolet radiation levels are almost the same as in the sunshine. In the shade, you're better off than in the sun, but if you can see the sky, a lot of radiation is getting to your skin. That's especially true

near water and other reflective surfaces.

- Check your altitude. The intensity of radiation increases by about 4 percent for every 1,000 feet in altitude.

- Children under six months of age should avoid the sun completely. Dress them in loose, but tightly woven clothing. It is safe to apply sunscreen on a baby's skin, but use a non-alcohol based sunscreen.

- The sun can burn your eyes just like your skin. Overexposure to the sun can cause inflammation of the cornea called keratitis.

- Buy sunglasses with built in UV-blocking sun protection. Check the label to make sure. Even children should wear protective sunglasses.



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