



Sun Safety Tips for Families

Some ways to stay sun-safe outdoors include wearing sun protection gear like a hat with a wide brim and sunglasses to protect your face and eyes, and wearing a long-sleeved shirt and trousers or a long skirt for additional protection when possible.

Millions each year are treated for skin cancer. Skin cancer can be serious, expensive, and sometimes even deadly. Fortunately, most skin cancers can be prevented.

- Ultraviolet (UV) rays—from the sun or from artificial sources like tanning beds—are known to cause skin cancer.
- Damage from exposure to UV rays builds up over time, so sun protection should start at an early age.

Protect yourself from skin cancer!

Stay Sun-Safe Outdoors

- Seek shade, especially during midday hours. This includes 10 am to 4 pm, March through October, and 9 am to 3 pm, November through February. Umbrellas, trees, or other shelters can provide relief from the sun.
- Be extra careful around surfaces that reflect the sun's rays, like snow, sand, water, and concrete.
- Wear sun protection gear like a hat with a wide brim and sunglasses to protect your face and eyes.
- Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts and other eye problems. Wrap-around sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection by blocking UV rays from the side.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and trousers or a long skirt for additional protection when possible. If that's not practical, try wearing a T-shirt or a beach cover-up.
- Apply a thick layer of broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher at least 15 minutes before going outside, even on cloudy or overcast days. Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.

Limit UV Exposure: Discourage Indoor and Outdoor Tanning

UV rays are strongest

- From late morning through mid-afternoon.
- Near the equator.
- During summer months.
- At high altitudes.

Remember that sunburns and skin damage can occur even on cloudy or overcast days.

Indoor and outdoor tanning often begin in the teen years and continue into adulthood.

Indoor tanning—

- Exposes users to intense levels of UV rays, a known cause of cancer.
- Does not offer protection against future sunburns. A “base tan” is actually a sign of skin damage.
- Can spread germs that can cause serious skin infections.
- Can lead to serious injury. Indoor tanning accidents and burns send more than 3,000 people to the emergency room each year.

Indoor tanning should not be used by anyone younger than age 18. There’s no such thing as a safe tan.



Choose Sun-Safety Strategies that Work

Broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher is important, but it shouldn’t be your only defense against the sun. For the **best protection**, use shade, clothing, a hat with a wide brim, and sunglasses, as well as sunscreen.