



TO YOUR HEALTH

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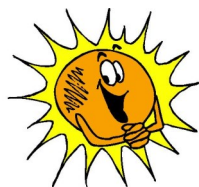
Sunlit Solutions: Strategies for UV Safety

by Maeve Lobo, LICSW

While sunlight is crucial in processing vitamin D for the body, ultraviolet (UV) radiation can also cause significant damage to the body. According to the CDC, skin cancer affects 1 in 5 Americans by age 70, highlighting its prevalence due to UV exposure.

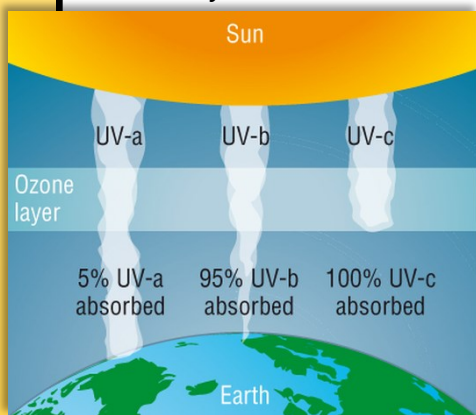
The CDC reports that older Americans often fail to protect themselves adequately from sun exposure. Less than half of older adults shield their skin when outdoors for extended periods, contributing to a high incidence of sunburns. A survey carried out by the 2015 National Health Interview Survey revealed that 1 in 10 older adults had a sunburn in the last year. While shade is popular, women often use sunscreen, whereas men prefer protective clothing.

The American Academy of Dermatology marks July as UV month. Here are a few issues to consider while enjoying the warmest month of the year.



Understanding UV Rays

UV rays, though invisible, affect our skin differently:



Ultraviolet A (UVA): with a longer wavelength UVA penetrates deeply, accelerating skin aging and potentially causing skin cancer. It constitutes 95% of UV radiation

reaching Earth and can penetrate clouds and windows. Just remember car windshields are protected from UVA rays, but the side, back and sunroof are not covered.

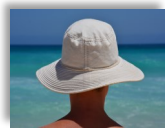
Ultraviolet B (UVB): Shorter in wavelength, UVB affects the skin's outer layers, causing sunburn and contributing to skin cancer. SPF (Sun Protection Factor) on sunscreen labels indicates protection against UVB rays. The SPF number on the product indicates how long it takes for the sun's radiation to redden your skin. The intensity of UVB rays fluctuates but it can cause skin damage throughout the year. UVB rays do not penetrate glass and can be filtered.



Though both types differ slightly, UV exposure is exceedingly damaging. It causes skin cell defects and mutations that result in skin cancer. Sunburns are a result of UV exposure and give rise to melanoma cancer, the most common skin cancer. According to Weill Cornell Medicine, 5 sunburns can cause melanoma cancer. Besides skin cancer, UV rays are a source of cataracts and eyelid cancers.

Protecting Against UV Damage

Clothing provides the best defense against the sun. Dark and bright colors as well as densely woven fabrics protect against the sun. Loose fitting garments are preferable. Tight fitting clothes that are stretched allow more UV light to flow through. Clothing that covers up to the ankle provides a great deal of protection.



Start at the top and don a broad-brimmed hat for added style and protection against wrinkles and skin cancer.

Ultraviolet Protection Factor also known as UPF can appear on clothing labels. It indicates the level of penetration the sun has on that fabric. UPF 50 would mean that 1/50 of UV radiation can reach the skin. It blocks about 95 % of the sun's rays.



During very hot days stay in the shade. The sun is hottest between the hours of 10:00am and 4:00pm. Come up

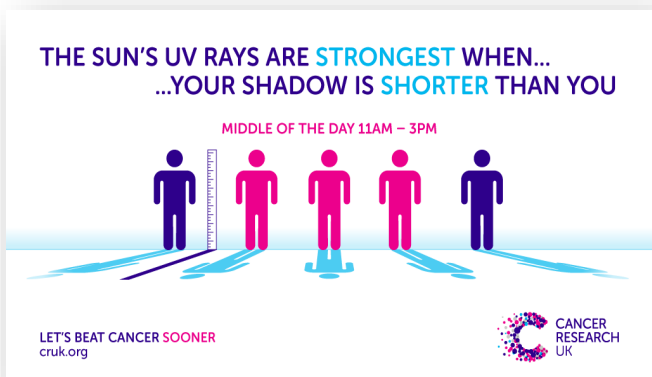
to the library or have a sip of lemonade at the Victoria Café during these hours.

Using sunscreen is a matter of trial and error. Some of us have a preference for a moisturizer while others use a spray. Select a product that you can use every day. Sunscreen has to be applied generously and evenly. However, always ensure that you understand the labels.

Broad Spectrum on a label essentially indicates that the product protects against UVA and UVB rays.

Water Resistance on a label cannot claim to be fool proof but it will reveal the amount of time the product is water resistant. It is usually between 40 – 80 minutes. Staying in the water is not total protection from the sun. You can still burn!

The Skin Cancer Foundation suggests individuals use SPF of 15 or higher daily. For outdoor use, a water resistant broad spectrum sunscreen product with an SPF of 30 is advisable. It should be applied every two hours if you are swimming or sweating. The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention advises using about an ounce of sunscreen every two hours.



Understanding UV exposure and protective measures empowers us to enjoy outdoor activities safely. By prioritizing UV protection through clothing, hats, and sunscreen, we can mitigate the risks of skin cancer and other UV-related health issues. As you embrace the delights of summer, remember to shield yourself from UV rays, ensuring health and style in equal measure.

<https://weillcornell.org/news/uv-safety-awareness-month>

<https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-prevention/sun-protection/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/research/many-older-adults-dont-protect-their-skin-from-the-sun.html>

https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/59/Supplement_1/S17/5491127?login=false

Stay hydrated!

The sensation of thirst diminishes with age, don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink. Have an extra glass of water or your favorite non-alcoholic beverage on hot summer days. Try a little lemon in your water, it's a great way to start your day.



Just a Reminder



The Clinic is always happy to accommodate Residents on short notice, however please call the Clinic for a same day visit rather than just dropping in. This will reduce your wait time and the Clinic will be able to better serve you.

- Thank you for helping us with this matter.