



Sun Sense



People of all ages enjoy spending time outdoors. Often it can be easy to forget that something as simple as getting fresh air or playing outside can cause harmful health effects if we do not know how to protect ourselves.

Practising sun sense is a simple way to enjoy the outdoors while at the same time protecting yourself and your family from the harmful health effects from overexposure to direct sunlight.

UV Index

Environment Canada's UV Index predicts the strength of the sun's daily UV rays. By understanding the UV index you will be able to determine how to best protect yourself and your family from the sun.

SUN SENSE TIPS

- ⚙ Avoid exposure to direct sunlight between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- ⚙ Whenever possible, seek shade as protection from the sun.
- ⚙ Keep babies under 12 months out of direct sunlight.
- ⚙ Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- ⚙ Wear clothing that is loose fitting, tightly woven and light weight.
- ⚙ Wear a hat that protects the face and the back of the neck.
- ⚙ Don't forget your sunglasses.
- ⚙ Avoid indoor tanning.
- ⚙ Avoid the outdoors when the UV index is 3 or higher.
- ⚙ Check your skin regularly for spots, moles, or blemishes that are unfamiliar.

UV Index	Reading	What you can do to protect yourself.
Low	0 - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal sun protection required for normal activity. • Wear sunglasses on bright days. If you're outside for more than one hour, cover up and use sunscreen. • Reflection off snow can nearly double UV strength. Wear sunglasses and apply sunscreen.
Moderate	3 - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take precautions – cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen – especially if you're outside for 30 minutes or more. • Look for shade around midday when the sun is strongest.
High	6 - 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need protection – get out the sunscreen, hats and cover up. UV damages the skin and can cause sunburn. • Try and stay out of the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. and take full precautions – seek shade, cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
Very High	8 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra precautions required – unprotected skin will be damaged and can burn quickly. • Avoid the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. and take full precautions – seek shade, cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
Extreme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A UV Index of 11 or more is very rare in Canada. However, the UV Index can reach 14 or more in the tropics and southern U.S. • Take full precautions. Unprotected skin will be damaged and can burn in minutes. Avoid the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen • White sand and other bright surfaces reflect UV and increase UV exposure, so follow all the precautions you would when you're at home.

FAQ

Q. What is SPF?

A. SPF stands for sun protection factor. It is the ratio between the amount of UV exposure causing redness with and without sunscreen.

Example: If you apply sunscreen with an SPF of 15, your skin will take 15 minutes longer to redden in the sun than it would without protection.

Q. If I continue to reapply sunscreen can I stay out in the sun longer?

A. No. Reapplying sunscreen only reinforces sun protection. It does not increase the amount of time you can spend in the sun beyond the SPF.

Q. Does sunscreen expire?

A. Yes. Be sure to check your sunscreen bottle for its expiry date before you use it. It is a good idea to purchase new sunscreen every year.

Q. Are some people at a greater risk of developing skin damage from the harmful effects of the sun?

A. Yes. People with fair skin, blond and red hair, many moles, freckles and those who usually burn and never tan are at a greater risk of skin damage from the sun.

Q. Do tanning beds cause the same harmful effects to my skin as the sun?

A. Yes. Not only can tanning beds cause long-term health effects, such as skin cancer, they can also affect your eyes. Overexposure to UV radiation can cause temporary but painful eye conditions.



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http://www.dermatology.ca/english/public-patients/spotcheck_e.html