

How to be SunSmart

Don't let sunburn catch you out

Whether you are at home or abroad, use shade, clothing and at least factor 15 sunscreen to protect yourself from sunburn.

Spend time in the shade between 11 and 3

The summer sun is most damaging to your skin in the middle of the day. Find shade under umbrellas, trees, canopies or indoors.

Cover up with a t-shirt, hat and sunglasses

When the sun is at its strongest, sunscreen is not enough.

Use at least factor 15 sunscreen

Choose a sunscreen that is at least factor 15 and labelled 'broad spectrum'. Use it generously and regularly to get the right amount of protection.

Take extra care with children

Young skin is delicate. Keep babies out of the sun, especially around midday.

Avoid sunbeds

Sunbeds are not a safer alternative to tanning in the sun. The intensity of some of the UV rays they give off can be 10-15 times higher than that of the midday sun.

Report unusual moles or skin changes to your doctor

Finding skin cancer early saves lives.

Common questions?

Is sunscreen all I need to protect myself from the sun?

No. Sunscreen does not give 100% protection and must be used along with other means of protection, such as clothing and shade. Never use sunscreen as an excuse to stay out in the sun for longer.

Do we all need lots of sun to get enough vitamin D?

No. Vitamin D is used to build and maintain strong bones. Our bodies need some sunshine to make this vitamin. But fair-skinned people do not have to spend a lot of time in the sun to make enough vitamin D. The amount of time it takes to make vitamin D is always less than the amount that leads to reddening or burning of the skin.



Further information



About being SunSmart

Visit Cancer Research UK's SunSmart website www.sunsmart.org.uk

Check the UV index forecast for the UK and Europe by going to www.metoffice.gov.uk and searching for UV index.

About cancer

For information about living with cancer visit www.cancerhelp.org.uk

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our information nurses on freephone **0808 800 4040**.

For information about finding skin cancer early please see our 'Detecting skin cancer' leaflet.

Order more leaflets

You can order our full range of leaflets free online at www.cancerresearchuk.org/leaflets

Support Cancer Research UK

If you would like to support our work please call **020 7121 6699** or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org

Together we will beat cancer

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Being SunSmart
can **reduce**
your cancer risk



Together we will beat cancer

In this booklet you can find out about:

- reducing your risk of skin cancer
- when you need to protect yourself
- how to be SunSmart.

Skin cancer is very common in the UK. Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or sunbeds is the main cause of skin cancer.

By enjoying the sun safely, taking care not to burn and avoiding sunbeds, you can reduce your risk of developing skin cancer.

Who is most at risk?

Some people are more likely than others to develop skin cancer. These people tend to have one or more of the following:

- fair skin that tends to burn in strong sun
- red or fair hair
- lots of moles or freckles
- a personal or family history of skin cancer
- a history of sunburn.

What is sunburn?

Sunburn does not have to be raw, peeling or blistering. If your skin has gone red in the sun, it is sunburnt.

Know your skin type

The fairer your skin, the more careful you need to be in the sun. Knowing your skin type can help you work out when you need to protect yourself, and what type of protection you might need.

Experts identify six different skin types. Colour and tone vary a lot within each skin type, but it is a useful guide. Match your hand colour to the photo. Choose the description that most closely matches your hair and eye colour and what happens to your skin in strong sun.



Type I

Often burns, rarely tans. Tends to have freckles, red or fair hair, blue or green eyes.

Type II

Usually burns, sometimes tans. Tends to have light hair, blue or brown eyes.

Type III

Sometimes burns, usually tans. Tends to have brown hair and eyes.

Type IV

Rarely burns, often tans. Tends to have dark brown eyes and hair.

Type V

Naturally brown skin. Often has dark brown eyes and hair.

Type VI

Naturally brown-black skin. Usually has black-brown eyes and hair.

The UV index

The global solar ultraviolet index, or UV index, is a way of describing the strength of the sun's rays at the earth's surface. The higher the value, the greater the danger from the sun and the less time it takes to damage your skin.

The UV index varies depending on where you are in the world, the time of year, the weather, the time of day and how high up you are. It is not always highest when it is hottest.

On a clear summer's day in the UK, the UV index may reach 7 around midday, but it is rarely higher. Near the equator the UV index is often greater.

Between October and March in the UK, the UV index is normally lower than 3, so even people with fair skin do not need to protect themselves. You can check today's UV index forecast for different parts of the UK and Europe at the Met Office website www.metoffice.gov.uk



When do I need to protect myself?

By knowing your skin type and using the UV index, you can work out when you need to protect yourself from the sun.

		Skin Type			
		I and II	III and IV	V	VI
UV Index	1	low	low	low	low
	2	medium	low	low	low
	3	high	medium	low	low
	4	high	medium	medium	low
	5	very high	high	medium	medium
	6	very high	high	high	medium

Low Risk:

No protection needed.

Medium risk:

Take care around midday and do not spend too long in the sun unprotected.

High risk:

Cover up and spend time in the shade between 11 and 3. Use at least factor 15 sunscreen on exposed skin.

Very high risk:

Be sure to cover up and stay in the shade between 11 and 3. And use at least factor 15 sunscreen. **If your skin goes pink or red after time in the sun then you need to do more to protect your skin.**