

VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute

Shedding light on sun protection



We all enjoy spending time outside in the sunshine. But did you know that skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the U.S.? While some types of skin cancer are highly curable, others are much more dangerous.¹ Here's what you need to know to protect yourself from the sun's harmful rays.

Risk factors²

Certain factors put you at a higher risk for skin cancer. You should be especially carefully if you have:

- Lighter skin
- Blue or green eyes
- Blond or red hair
- Skin that burns, freckles, reddens easily or becomes painful in the sun

- Lots of moles

You should also be careful if you have a history of:

- Skin cancer
- Family members with skin cancer
- Bad sunburns as a child
- Indoor tanning

Take a look at your skin³

It's important to take a look at your skin to check for any new moles, marks or bumps. After you take a shower, take a look at your skin from head to toe.

You'll want to keep an eye out for anything new, like:

- Moles that look different from other moles

- Red or darker color flaky, raised patches
- Flesh-colored firm bumps
- A mole that has changed size, shape, color or feel
- A sore that doesn't heal

Soak up the sunscreen⁴

15 minutes. That's all it takes for the sun's harmful UV rays to damage your skin. That's why it's important to wear sunscreen whenever you go outside – even on cold or cloudy days.

- Always apply a thick layer on any exposed parts of your body
- Use at least SPF 15
- Reapply every two hours, and after you swim or sweat
- Make sure your sunscreen isn't expired.
- Make-up and lip balm are not substitutes for sunscreen – unless it's at least SPF 15

Sources

- 1 http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/index.htm
- 2 http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/risk_factors.htm
- 3 <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/wyntk/skin/page15>
- 4 http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm

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