

Sun safety tips



After a long cold winter many families are taking advantage of the warm weather by getting outside. Whether you are getting ready for a camping trip, BBQ or just enjoying your backyard it is important to practice sun safety. There are many positive effects of the sun including warmth, light, and enhancing people's mood. Although Vitamin D is another positive quality of the sun, a typical person only needs about 10 minutes exposure per day to produce 10,000 IU of the vitamin. Keep in mind that UV rays are strongest between 10 am and 4 pm when most outdoor activities are taking place. Even on cloudy overcast days people can get an unexpected sunburn and skin damage.

Ways you can protect your family and still have fun under the sun:

- **Cover up.** Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat. Make sure your sunglasses provide protection against both UVA and UVB rays.
- **Limit your time in the sun.** Keep out of the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. The UV index can be 3 or higher during those times. Seek shade when outdoors, like a park with big trees, partial roofs, awnings, umbrellas or gazebo tents.
- **Use the UV Index forecast.** When the UV index is 3 or higher, wear protective clothing (long sleeve shirts and pants, wide brim hats), sunglasses, and sunscreen, even when it's cloudy.
- **Use sunscreen.** Choose sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 and labelled "broad spectrum" and "water resistant". Get your children used to wearing sunscreen lotion early on. Pay close attention to the areas that are most exposed, like their face, lips, ears, neck, shoulders, back, knees, and the tops of their feet.
- **Drink plenty of cool liquids (especially water) before you feel thirsty.** Stay hydrated and cool to avoid heat illness. Dehydration (not having enough fluids in your body) is dangerous.
- **Avoid using tanning equipment.** There is no such thing as a safe tan – whether from the sun or a tanning bed. Tanning is sign of your skin cells in trauma and the more your skin is exposed to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, the greater your risk of skin cancer.

Even animals practice sun protection! Chimpanzees avoid the midday sun and hippos secrete pink-colored oil that acts like a sunscreen to protect their skin from sunburn. **Remember: Slop on sunscreen, slip on a long sleeve shirt/pants, slap on a wide brim hat, slide on sunglasses, and seek shade.**

Resources:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/sun-safety-basics.html>

<http://www.sunsmart.com.au/>

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/sun-sol/index-eng.php>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sun-safety.html>