

# SUN EXPOSURE

I WILL

- ...be sun smart
- ...decrease my risk of skin cancer
- ...have younger and healthy looking skin!

## CANCER AUSTRALIA RECOMMENDS:

- Avoiding excessive sun exposure and sunbeds, and wearing sunscreen and protective clothing to lower your risk of skin cancer.

### MYTH

#### MY SKIN CAN NATURALLY PROTECT ME FROM THE SUN

Skin cancers are caused by damage from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. UV rays penetrate deep into the skin and damage cells. These cells are then at risk of becoming cancerous. You can't feel UV damaging your skin and it happens even when the sun doesn't feel hot. When the UV index is three and above, it can be damaging to your skin. Wearing SPF 30+ or higher sunscreen is a good first step, but you need to do more to protect your skin, especially if you work or play sports outdoors.

- Wear sun protective clothing – sleeves are cool.
- Apply SPF 30+ or higher sunscreen, preferably water resistant – in this instance the numbers 30 and above are appealing! There are plenty of different options that are affordable and easy to apply, such as sprays.
- Put on a broad brimmed hat – they're all the fashion right now.
- Seek shade – avoid the shiny face and armpit rings look.
- Wear wraparound sunglasses that meet Australian standards – think Cyclops-chic.
- If you notice any skin changes, although it does not necessarily mean you have skin cancer, it is important to see your doctor to check.

### TOP TIP



Sunscreen takes 20 minutes to absorb, so apply before you head outside and remember to reapply as recommended.

### MYTH

#### I NEED LOTS OF SUN TO GET ENOUGH VITAMIN D

The sun is an important source of vitamin D, but the Australian climate means we get plenty of exposure, especially during summer. Here's how to get your vitamin D safely:

- When the UV index is 3 or above for most of the day, a few minutes of mid-morning or mid-afternoon sun exposure to your hands and arms on most days of the week is all you need. If you are outdoors longer than this, make sure you use sun protection measures.
- When the UV Index falls below 3, (usually during late autumn and winter) it's a good idea to spend time outdoors in the middle of the day with some skin uncovered on most days of the week.
- Combine this with daily exercise and a healthy diet of foods high in vitamin D, such as oily fish like salmon and mackerel, eggs, and vitamin D fortified margarine and dairy products.

### MYTH

#### SOLARIUMS ARE SAFE AND A TAN LOOKS SO GOOD!

Solariums are definitely not safe. They emit UV radiation levels up to six times higher than the midday summer sun, significantly increasing the risk of developing melanoma.

In fact, any form of tanning and sun exposure can increase your risk of cancer and damage your skin, even if you don't get burnt. It can also lead to wrinkles, patchy discolouration, freckles and moles. Keep your skin looking healthy and protected with a few simple rules:

- Most importantly, completely avoid any use of sunbeds. There's a reason there are no legal commercial solariums in Australia.
- If you really want the look of a tan, use fake tan instead (but remember that it doesn't protect your skin).
- Embrace your natural skin colour, flaunt it and protect it.

### DID YOU KNOW?



Commercial solariums are officially classified as Group 1 carcinogens (definitely carcinogenic to humans) by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

### MYTH

#### ONLY MY DOCTOR KNOWS WHAT CHANGES TO LOOK FOR

Don't let your skin be a stranger – after all, it is your body's largest organ.

- Make it a regular habit to check over your skin. This user-friendly guide gives you an idea of what to watch out for.
- Use a skin cancer risk calculator to understand your personal risk of skin cancer.
- Make sure you remember to check areas which are not normally exposed to the sun, and get a friend or your doctor to help check areas that are out of sight.
- If you notice any skin changes, although it does not necessarily mean you have skin cancer, it is important to see your doctor to check.

### MYTH

#### I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SUN PROTECTION WHEN IT'S OVERCAST

Because UV radiation can't be seen or felt, it's a good idea to keep up to date on when to protect yourself:

- Check the UV Alert daily – the Sun Protection Times are calculated on when the UV is predicted to be 3 or above, which is when it can be damaging to the skin.
- SunSmart UV app – This user-friendly app uses different features including an alert to make it easier for you to be smart about your sun exposure anytime, anywhere.

## FIND OUT MORE



@CancerAustralia

#checkyourcancerrisk

Sun Safety – Cancer Council Australia

Sun Smart – Cancer Council Victoria

SunSmart UV app – Cancer Council Victoria

The Dark Side of Tanning – Cancer Institute NSW

Cancer Australia Position Statement: Lifestyle risk factors and the primary prevention of cancer