



# The Importance of Sun Safety

With many of us eager to get out and enjoy the sunshine this summer after a very long winter cooped up and restrictions beginning to ease, it is important that we stay safe and protect ourselves in the sun.

Sun safety is important for everyone; we must all practice this to avoid damage to our eyes and skin. Sun damage to our skin can cause skin cancer so it is vitally important to know how to protect yourself.

## The risks of sun damage

It can be very tempting and easy to get excited when we start getting sunshine to just head out and soak up as much sun as possible, but doing so in an unsafe way can cause eye damage and skin damage which can also lead to skin cancer in people as early as their twenties. Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers.

Over years of exposure and potential damage to your skin from sun exposure your skin may also age by gaining more wrinkles, become dryer and you will eventually start bruising easier. Heatstroke is **a condition caused by your body overheating, usually as a result of prolonged exposure to or physical exertion in high temperatures.** This most serious form of heat injury, heatstroke, can occur if your body temperature rises to 104 F (40 C) or higher.

## Practice the 5 S's for personal sun safety

An easy way to remember ways to protect yourself is by practicing the 5 S's:

1. Slip on a t-shirt/top to cover your skin
2. Slop on SPF 30+ sunscreen to protect your exposed skin
3. Slap on a hat to protect your head and face
4. Slide on some quality sunglasses to protect your eyes
5. Shade from the sun when you can to give yourself breaks

## Things to consider

- The sun is strongest in the UK from March until October between the times of 11:00 and 15:00 each day
- Make sure any children you're responsible for are also well protected and hydrated
- Make sure the sunscreen has not passed its expiry date
- If you're going out, take sunscreen with you but also apply twice.
- 30 minutes before you go out and again just before you leave
- Apply sunscreen again straight after you've been in water even if it is "water resistant" as after sweating or drying with a towel may have rubbed it off





## Care first Webinar Article

### If you burn

You should be protecting your skin from burning at all times when exposed to the sun but if you do you should:

- Treat the burnt areas with cool water and then apply after sun cream
- If sore take painkillers such as ibuprofen or paracetamol to help ease the pain and discomfort
- Stay out of the sun until all signs of redness are gone

### Other useful links

If you would like to access further information about sun safety in more detail please follow the links listed here:

- NHS Website for Sun Safety
- Dangers of Prolonged Sun Exposure
- UV Radiation and Your Skin
- 10 Tips for Protecting Your Skin from the Sun

### More information

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

If you would like to view the Webinar on **'The Importance of Sun Safety'** this is being delivered live on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 12:00pm**, please use the following link to register for this session –

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7606448267545804118>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.



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## Care first Webinar Article

### Debunking the Myths:

- **'I can't get sunburnt in the UK; the UV rays aren't strong enough.'**

Wrong! Always protect your skin even in the UK.

- **'I can't get sun damage on a cloudy summer day.'**

Even if you can't see any blue sky, a significant amount of UV rays can still get through the clouds, so it's best to apply sunscreen if you're out and about during the summer.

- **'Using sunscreen alone will protect my skin.'**

No sunscreen offers 100% protection so it should never be used as a substitute for clothing and shade

- **'My sunscreen says it's water resistant, so I don't need to reapply regularly.'**

Despite what the packaging promises, swimming, sweating, rubbing, or towelling down means you will end up removing the sunscreen from your body. Always reapply after sporting activity or at least every two hours.

- **'My skin is only damaged if it turns red.'**

Sunburn and skin peeling is the extreme end of skin damage from UV rays. When the skin 'tans' this is damaging your skin and putting you at risk of skin cancer in the future.

- **'I can't get sunburnt through windows.'**

Wrong! UVA radiation can penetrate glass. This can be a car window, or even your windows at home. Be sure to protect your skin if you're on long car journeys or spend a lot of time sat by sunny windows.

- **'SPF25 is half the SPF protection of SPF50.'**

SPF50 does not offer twice the protection as SPF25 even though it offers a higher level of protection, so don't be fooled!

- **'I have to spend lots of money on sunscreen for it to be effective.'**

This is not the case, if you are willing to shop around you do not have to spend lots of money. Look for a sunscreen with a high SPF and 4 or 5 star UVA rating.

- **'I can simply use aftersun to repair the damage done by sunburn'**

Aftersun may help to soothe and cool your skin, however, it cannot fix the damaged done to the DNA inside your cells.

- **'Skin cancer only affects older people.'**

Malignant melanoma is one of the most common cancers in young adults (aged 15-34) in the UK.

- **'I shouldn't use sunscreen as I will become vitamin D deficient.'**

This has not proven to be true from studies. Using SPF 50 will filter out 98% of UVB rays, when used perfectly. So rays will still reach the skin. You can also get vitamin D through diet and supplements if you are concerned.

- **'A tan is healthy'**

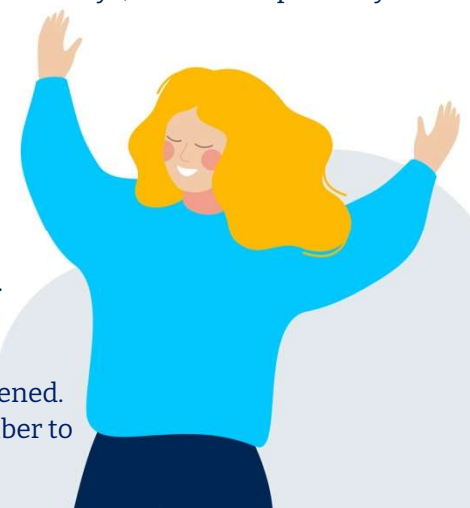
There is no such thing as a healthy tan. If the skin changes colour it shows that damage has been done to cells.

- **'I use a 'once-a-day' sunscreen, I don't need to reapply'**

Even if a sunscreen states it is once-a-day it should be reapplied regularly. The majority of people do not apply sunscreen correctly and miss parts of the body.

- **'Sunscreen lasts forever'**

Like most cosmetics, sunscreens have an expiration date. Look for the jar icon on the back of the product to see how long it is effective for once it has been opened. So you know, simply write the date you open the product on the bottle. Remember to store your sunscreen in a cool place and not in direct sunlight.



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