

How to Survive the Hot Summer Sun

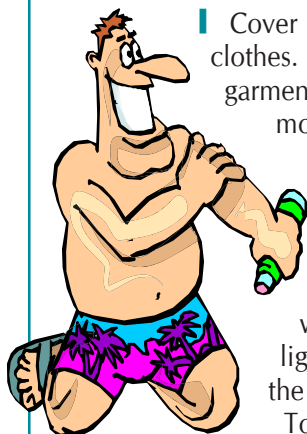
Sun worshipers, beware. Just two decades ago, you had a 1 in 250 chance of developing melanoma, the most lethal form of skin cancer. Today, your odds are one in 41.

Here's how you can enjoy the summer and still protect yourself:

- Buy a sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and an SPF of 15 to 30. A sunscreen labeled "All Day" is your best choice. All Day means eight hours worth of protection. Apply one tablespoon to your face and neck, two to three tablespoons for your body. Put it on a half hour before exposure. If the label does not say "All Day," you must reapply every two or three hours.

The best protection against UVA rays are sunscreens that include zinc oxide, titanium dioxide or avobenzone.

Most sunscreens protect against both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) light. UVB is responsible for sunburn. UVA penetrates deeper into the skin. Both contribute to melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer.



- Cover up with clothes. Polyester garments are usually more protective than cotton or linen, but it depends on the weight and the weave. (Sunlight gets through the holes.) To determine if

clothing will help provide sun block, hold a single layer of it up to the sun. If the sun shines through, it does not provide adequate protection.

- Wear a hat with a two-inch brim.

- Stay out of the sun completely between 10 am and 4 pm, or limit your time in the sun to an hour or two, but not at the worst time, 11 am to 3 pm.

- Don't trust the clouds or the shade. On cloudy days, ultraviolet radiation levels are almost the same as in the sunshine. In the shade, you're better off than in the sun, but if you can see the sky, a lot of radiation is getting to your skin. That's especially true near water and other reflective surfaces.

- Check your altitude. The intensity of radiation increases by about 4 percent for every 1,000 feet in altitude.

- Children under six months of age should avoid the sun completely. Dress them in loose, but tightly woven clothing. It is safe to apply sunscreen on a baby's skin, but use a non-alcohol based sunscreen.

- The sun can burn your eyes just like your skin. Overexposure to the sun can cause inflammation of the cornea called keratitis.

Buy sunglasses with built in UV-blocking sun protection. Check the label to make sure. Even children should wear protective sunglasses.

Treating Sunburn

Sunburn is caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation burning the skin. Injury to the skin can start within 30 minutes of exposure. The skin initially turns red about two to six hours after exposure. The peak effects are twelve to twenty-four hours.

Here's how to treat a mild sunburn:

- For a bad sunburn, apply cool compresses with equal parts milk and water for 30 minutes, four times a day.

- Cool (not ice) baths may help.

- Tylenol or Motrin usually are sufficient for relief of discomfort.

- Vitamin C creams like Cellex-C may decrease the severity of a burn. Lotions or sprays containing local anesthetics such as benzocaine or lidocaine help alleviate the suffering. Aloe vera speeds healing.

- Don't use butter or steroid creams.

- Wear light fitting clothing

- Avoid direct sun for approximately one week

- Blistering or severe pain require medical attention. Chronic sun exposure may lead to premature aging, wrinkling and skin cancers.



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