

Do my children require extra protection?

Children and teens have thinner skin than adults, so they need extra protection. The majority of our sun exposure occurs when we are under 18 years of age so teaching children and teens to protect themselves from an early age can help reduce future risks of developing skin cancer. Follow the points below



the points below to protect your children from the harmful rays of the sun.

- Educate your children and get them used to using sunscreen at an early age.
- Encourage your children to wear a hat and sunglasses.
- Plan outdoor activities in the shade especially during periods when the sun is the strongest. Don't let children fall asleep in the sun.
- Keep infants covered up and out of the sun
- Sunscreen is not recommended for infants under six months old.
- Set a good example by protecting yourself.

What about cloudy days?

Don't let clouds fool you. The sun's UV rays can be just as harmful on cloudy or hazy days. Many people experience severe sunburns during days of light cloud cover. The fact that we don't feel the sun's heat tricks us into thinking that it can't burn. Also, be aware that you can even get a burn in the winter if you are outside long enough. Therefore, it is important to protect against UV rays all year round especially if you are an active outdoor person.

Sun Protection



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Why worry about sun protection?

The earth's ozone layer once protected people from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun, but that is no longer the case. Over time, damage done to the ozone layer has made it a lot thinner; so more ultraviolet radiation is getting through to us on the earth's surface. Long-term exposure to these ultraviolet rays are causing more and more identifiable health problems such as: sunburns, cataracts, wrinkling, spotting and premature aging of the skin, weakening of the immune system and skin cancer.

What are ultraviolet rays?

Sunlight is made up of many kinds of light of different wavelengths-ultraviolet (UV) is just one of them. It is an invisible type of light projected by the sun and certain kinds of lamps. The two types of ultraviolet light rays that reach the earth's surface are UVA and UVB-both are harmful so when purchasing a sunscreen, make sure it provides protection from both kinds of UV rays.



What is the UV index?

Environment Canada developed the UV index as a measure of the intensity of UV radiation based on changes in the ozone layer each day. The rating is a numerical scale of 0 to 10 with 10 indicating the highest degree of sunburn risk. Ten is equal to the summer tropics at noon. The rating is usually reported with the news and weather. The table indicates the numeric ratings and how fast a fair skinned person can burn for each rating. These ratings allow you to judge your sunburn risk for outdoor activities each day. No matter what the risk, it is recommended that you wear sunscreen.

UV Index	Index Category	Duration until a fair-skinned person burns
9-10	Extreme	Less than 15 minutes
7-9	High	Approx. 20 minutes
4-7	Moderate	Approx. 30 minutes
0-4	Low	Over 1 hour

How can I protect myself from exposure to UV rays?

Reducing your risk of skin cancer, and other harmful affects of UV light is a matter of reducing your exposure to the sun and other UV sources - such as sunlamps. This does not mean you have to stop enjoying outdoor activities. It means you enjoy them smarter and safer. The following methods will help you protect yourself and your family against the sun's harmful UV rays.

Cover up - If you are going to spend long periods in the sun, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, gloves and a wide brimmed hat or visor. Fabrics that are tightly woven provide more protection than loosely woven fabrics.

Spend time in the shade - Try to perform some of your outdoor activities in the shade, especially between the hours of 11 am and 4 pm when the sun is the strongest. Natural shade from trees or shade created by umbrellas or other items can reduce your exposure to UV rays.

Wear sunglasses - Purchase and wear sunglasses that screen out UV rays to help prevent the chances of cataracts in the future.

Use sunscreens - There are many sunscreens on the market today, they usually range from 15 - 45 SPF (sun protection factor). The SPF number indicates how many times longer you can stay in the sun before you will burn. If you burn in 10 minutes then applying a sunscreen with a SPF of 15 will allow you to be exposed for about 150 minutes before burning. Get in the habit of using sunscreens. They work when they are used right. To use them right you need to put on a thick layer 20 to 30 minutes before you go out into the sun. You also need to reapply them regularly. Even those that are water and sweat proof should be reapplied about every 2 hours.

Avoid sunbathing and tanning salons - Contrary to popular opinion, a tan is not a sign of health. It is a sign of damaged skin. Studies show that skin cancer is most often caused by over exposure to UV rays which damage the skin cells directly in the form of sunburns and tans or weaken the immune mechanisms in the skin and the rest of the body causing cancer indirectly.

Know your medications - Certain antibiotics, diuretics, antidepressants, hormone replacements and allergy medications can increase your sensitivity to the sun's UV rays. Consult your PharmaChoice pharmacist regarding any medications you may be taking.