



Protect Your Skin in the Sun



CHALLENGE
Protect your skin
from too much
sun exposure
this month.

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of the days you follow the sun exposure advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Stay out of the sun, use sunscreen, wear protective clothes and sunglasses, and avoid tanning beds.
2. Read "Sunshine: Friend or Enemy?" "For Healthier Skin," and "What Is SPF?"
3. To complete the Challenge, you must protect yourself from too much sun exposure on at least 22 days this month.
4. Keep a record of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Sunshine: Friend or Enemy?

You need some sun for a healthy body. The primary source of vitamin D is sunshine, which your skin converts into vitamin D. But the amount of time needed in the sun is minimal. Just 10-12 minutes of direct sunshine once or twice a day in the summer is all most people need. After that, it's time to cover up and apply sunscreen to protect your skin from damage.

About a million Americans a year learn that they have skin cancer. It is the most common cancer in the United States. Worldwide, one in three cancers diagnosed is a skin cancer. Today, two to three million *non-melanoma* (less dangerous) skin cancers and 132,000 *melanoma* (very dangerous) skin cancers occur globally each year. The two factors that increase a person's risk for skin cancer are:

1. Too much recreational or work-related sun exposure
2. A history of sunburn

Repeated tanning and sunburns also cause cosmetic damage to the skin, including spider veins (those visible blood vessels on the cheeks or nose), rough and thickened skin, age spots, and wrinkles. You might not have realized this, but a tan is the skin's response to skin cells being damaged or killed by excessive ultraviolet (UV) rays.

The main cause of skin cancer is UV radiation, which comes in two forms: ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB). UVB is the one that causes sunburn. UVA is recognized as a more penetrating radiation that contributes to premature aging and wrinkles. Both, however, are linked to skin cancer. Artificial sources of UV, such as tanning beds, are also skin cancer culprits.

Your risk of developing skin cancer is affected by where you live. For example, skin cancer is more common in hot and sunny Texas than it is in Canada, where the sun's rays are not as strong. Worldwide, South Africa and Australia have the highest rates of skin cancer. People with the lightest skin generally have the highest risk of skin cancers due to their relative lack of skin pigment. Even so, anyone can get skin cancer.

Risk Factors for Skin Cancer

- Fair to light complexion
- Blue or light-colored eyes
- Red or blond hair
- Family history of skin cancer
- Personal history of skin cancer
- Unprotected and/or excessive exposure to UV radiation (sun or tanning beds)
- History of sunburns early in life
- Atypical moles
- A large number of moles
- Freckles (an indicator of sun sensitivity and sun damage)
- Occupational exposure to coal tar, pitch, creosote, arsenic compounds, or radium



What's Your Skin Type?

Although everyone is at risk for skin cancer, people with skin types I and II are at highest risk.

Skin type	Do you burn in the sun?	Do you tan after having been in the sun?	Recommended precautions
I	Always	Never or seldom tan	Extremely susceptible to skin damage and skin cancer. Wear SPF30+ sunscreen and clothing with UPF rating of 30+. Seek shade whenever outside.
II	Usually	Sometimes tan, but minimally	Highly susceptible to skin damage and skin cancer. Wear SPF30+ sunscreen and clothing with UPF rating of 30+. Seek shade whenever outside.
III	Sometimes	Usually tan gradually to a light brown	Susceptible to skin damage and skin cancer. Wear SPF15+, protective clothing, and seek mid-day shade.
IV	Seldom	Always tan well to moderately brown	At risk for skin damage and skin cancer. Wear SPF 15+ sunscreen, and seek mid-day shade.
V	Rarely	Easily tan	Still at risk for skin cancer. Wear SPF 15+ sunscreen, and seek mid-day shade.
VI	Rarely	Skin seems insensitive to sun, but can still burn	Still at risk for skin cancer. Wear SPF 15+ sunscreen, and seek mid-day shade.

Source: Skin Cancer Foundation. 2011.

For Healthier Skin

Experts believe that four out of five cases of skin cancer could be prevented. Here are proven sun-safety tips that can help you reduce your risk of skin cancer and premature wrinkling and aging of the skin.

When you're outdoors:

- Avoid outdoor activities during the middle of the day** (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) whenever possible. That's when the sun's rays are strongest. Here's one way to tell if you should be in the shade: If your shadow is shorter than you are, you're likely to burn. UV radiation is the greatest in late spring and early summer. But exposure to UV rays is always a risk.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your ears and neck.** Avoid straw hats with holes that let sunlight – and UV rays – through. Look for a tightly woven fabric, such as canvas. Some sun hats are ventilated on the sides to keep the head cool while covered.
- When appropriate, wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants.** Clothing will protect your skin more than sunscreen will.

A loose-fitting but tightly woven fabric offers the best protection. (If you can see through the fabric when you hold it up to the light, the fabric is too thin to protect your skin.) If that's not practical, wear a dark-colored t-shirt or beach cover-up.

- Boost your protection by wearing sunscreen under your clothing.** UV rays easily penetrate many fabrics.
- Reapply sunscreen after you swim, rub your skin, or perspire.**
- Always wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen** (one that blocks UVA and UVB rays) with at least SPF 15. Apply it at least 10-15 minutes before going out in the sun. Reapply it every two or three hours when you're in the sun. Pay particular attention to the most exposed parts of your head, such as ears, nose, forehead, and neck.

- Protect your lips!** According to the World Health Organization, lip screen protects against recurrent lip eruptions of cold sores.
- Seek shade whenever possible** – before you need relief from the sun.
- Wear sunscreen even when you are under a sun umbrella or covered porch.** UV rays can reflect off any surface, including sand, water, concrete, and snow.
- Wear sunscreen even on overcast days** – yes, even in the winter. UV rays can penetrate clouds.
- Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps,** which produce ultraviolet radiation. According to research, tanning lamps can release UV rays that are 15 times stronger than the sun.

More →

When you're working indoors:

- Arrange your workspace so you are not in direct sunlight.
- Cover your windows with blinds or shades during peak sun hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

While you're driving:

- Apply sunscreen to any exposed areas of skin (especially hands, forearms, and face) before you start driving.
- Consider getting tinted glass on side and rear windows. Car windows only provide partial UV protection.
- Even if you only have a short commute, be aware that sun exposure has a cumulative effect. The damaging effect could build up over many years.

To protect your eyes:

- Wear sunglasses that provide 100-percent UV protection. Wrap-around lenses work the best, because they keep the sun's rays from sneaking in from the side. Excessive UV rays on the eyes can cause cataracts.
- Wear large frames and lenses that cover the entire eye.
- Neutral gray and amber brown lenses give true colors, particularly to red and green stoplights.
- Remember that buying higher-priced sunglasses doesn't necessarily mean you're buying better protection.

The American Cancer Society recommends you...

- Slip on a shirt
 - Slop on sunscreen
 - Slap on a wide-brimmed hat
 - Wrap on sunglasses
- ...to help protect your skin when outside – even on overcast days.

Child Sun-Safety Guidelines

Even though most skin cancers appear after age 50, the sun's damaging effects usually begin early in life. Today's skin cancer likely began as childhood sunburn. While it might be too late for you to prevent childhood UV exposure, it's not too late for you to protect your children.

- ✓ Keep babies younger than six months old out of direct sunlight.
- ✓ Keep your child out of direct sunlight as much as possible, especially in the hottest part of the day. Whenever possible, dress your child in a hat and lightweight pants and a long-sleeved shirt for outings during the middle of the day. Add UV-protected sunglasses if your child will wear them, or a brimmed hat to shade the eyes.
- ✓ Protect your child with water resistant sunscreens. Use those with an SPF of 15 or higher. You should always apply sunscreen at least 10-15 minutes before sun exposure. Be sure to reapply it after your child has played in the water.
- ✓ Try a "physical" or "chemical-free" sun block made – one with minerals like zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. These ingredients sit on top of the skin and form a barrier against the sun's rays. Chemical sunscreens are absorbed by the skin, which may cause an allergic reaction.
- ✓ With a new sunscreen, do a patch-test first. If a rash or redness develops, use a hypoallergenic formula instead.
- ✓ Be a good role model by practicing sun safety yourself.



What Is SPF?

SPF stands for "sun protection factor." It measures how much UVB actually reaches your skin. (For UVA there is no SPF standard.)

Wearing an SPF 15 sunscreen is like getting only one minute of sun for every 15 minutes that you're actually exposed. If your unprotected skin turns red after 10 minutes in the sun, SPF 15 would extend the time it takes you to burn to 150 minutes.

If you'll be spending time in the water, use a "water resistant" sunscreen. Remember to reapply sunscreen before it completely washes off. Even if you're not in the water, dermatologists say you should reapply sunscreen every 40-80 minutes.

How much SPF is enough?

To get the full SPF protection, you need to use the right amount of sunscreen. For the average adult, that means about two tablespoons per use. That may seem like a lot, but any less reduces your protection.

Find a sunscreen with the level of protection you need – one that won't irritate your skin. Some cosmetics and skin moisturizers also contain SPF 15.

Always use sunscreen along with other methods: avoiding the sun and wearing protective clothing. Both of these are far more protective – and less costly – than sunscreen!

Remember: The aim of using sunscreen is not to prolong your stay in the sun. It's to protect the exposed parts of your body that are most at risk for sun damage.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology. 2011; American Academy of Pediatrics. 2011; American Cancer Society. 2011; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011; Harvard Health Letter; 26(8); Skin Cancer Foundation. 2011; World Health Organization. 2011.



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Instructions

1. Post the Health Challenge Calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. To complete the Challenge, you must head for shade, cover up, and use sunscreen when the sun is strongest (between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.) – even during your commute to and from work. Use this calendar to keep track.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you followed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advice for sun exposure. You must meet this goal on at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this health practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I practiced sun safety.

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking



Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____