



Preventing Skin Cancer

While you can't take back the past, there are steps you can take now to help decrease your chance of developing skin cancer. It's easy to forget sunscreen in the middle of winter, but it is important to take precautions any time of the year. The Skin Cancer Foundation has developed the following guidelines for year-round sun protection.

Guideline #1: Use a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher when spending time outdoors

- This applies to all outdoor activities: sports, shopping, picnicking, walking, gardening, or even waiting for the bus.
- Choose a sunscreen with ingredients that block both UVB and UVA rays.
- Apply liberally to all exposed skin. If you are wearing a bathing suit you should apply approximately one ounce of sunscreen per application.
- Don't forget to use sunscreen on your lips, ears, around eyes, neck, scalp, hands, and feet.
- Reapply at least every two hours and also after swimming or sweating.

Guideline #2: Seek the shade

- But don't forget to wear sunscreen also. Sunlight can bounce off reflective surfaces and reach you even beneath an umbrella or tree.

Guideline #3: Cover up

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants in dark or bright colors. UV rays can get through light colors and wet fabric.
- Broad-brimmed hats are a great way to protect your neck, ears, scalp, and face. Baseball caps are great for shading your face but leave your neck, lower face, and ears exposed.
- Wear UV-blocking sunglasses with wraparound or large frames.

Guideline #4: Never seek a tan

- There is no such thing as a healthy tan. A tan is the skin's response to the sun's damaging rays.

Guideline #5: Stay away from tanning parlors and artificial tanning devices

- Indoor tanning lamps emit UV radiation that is many times more intense than natural sunlight. Tanning lamps can cause burns, and premature aging of the skin, and increase the risk of skin cancer.

Guideline #6: Protect your children and teach them sun safety at an early age

- Skin damage accumulates over the course of a lifetime, so it is important to teach your children healthy habits at a young age.

Wellness