



Skip the sizzle.

UV SAFETY

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. Although people with fair skin are at the greatest risk, anyone can get skin cancer.

Protecting your skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays can decrease your risk of skin cancer and help you prevent wrinkles.

> Avoid sun exposure.

Invisible UV rays from the sun like UVA and UVB rays are a major cause of skin cancer. They can also contribute to sunburn, acne, and premature aging of the skin, and may even affect your immune system.

To help lower your risk of skin cancer, protect yourself even on cloudy days. No matter what the season, you should limit your time in the sun, especially when the sun's rays are the most direct, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Looking at your shadow is a good way to see if the sun is directly overhead. A short shadow means that your UV exposure is high, and a long shadow means that the sun's rays are slanted and less intense.

If you must be outdoors, cover up with protective clothing:

- Protect your eyes with sunglasses. Make sure your sunglasses protect against UVA and UVB rays before you buy them.
- Protect your body with clothes that fully cover your arms and legs.
- Wear a hat to protect your head. Choose a hat with a wide enough brim to shade your ears and neck.

Stay away from tanning salons and sun lamps altogether. UV rays from these artificial sources may be just as dangerous as those from the sun and can cause serious skin problems.

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> It's never too early to start protecting your skin.

Up to eighty percent of a person's lifetime exposure to the sun occurs before age 18, so it's important to make sun safety a priority for your children. It's a good idea to keep infants younger than 6 months completely out of direct sunlight.

> Don't skimp on the sunscreen.

If you must be in the sun, be sure to use plenty of sunscreen. It takes about 1 ounce to cover an adult's body. Choose a broad-spectrum product that protects against both UVA and UVB rays, and has an SPF of at least 15. A sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 should be used for babies' and children's highly sensitive skin. And follow these helpful tips:

- Sunscreen needs time to absorb into your skin, so put it on at least half an hour before you go outside.
- Don't forget to protect the sensitive skin on your lips. A lip balm with an SPF of 15 or higher can help prevent cold sores and burns.
- Water and sweat can wash away sunscreen and lip balm. Reapply both every two to three hours (or more often if you're sweating heavily) and immediately after you go swimming.

> Watch for skin changes.

Skin cancer may start as a growth or mole, a change in a growth or mole, a sore that doesn't heal, or an irritation of the skin.

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer and shows up primarily in light-skinned people. While this type of skin cancer rarely spreads and is rarely fatal, it can cause serious illness and disfigurement if left untreated. Look for a lesion that doesn't heal, a bleeding area on the skin, or a scar of unknown origin.

Squamous cell carcinoma is the second most common type of skin cancer. It usually starts as a small, firm, painless lump or patch that grows to resemble a wart; a red, scaly patch of skin; or an ulcer. If left untreated, it can spread to other parts of the body and become fatal.

Malignant melanoma is the most dangerous type of skin cancer. It spreads quickly, often developing from a mole that hurts, bleeds, or itches. It is irregularly shaped or scaly, can have more than one color, is usually larger than a common mole, and may have a bump or nodule.

> To learn more

For more tips on how to play it safe in the sun, visit kp.org/sunscreen.

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