

SUNSMART – A HEALTHY UV BALANCE

A good balance of ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, tanning, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Overexposure to UV during childhood and adolescence is a major factor in future skin cancer risk. That's why it is especially important to keep children well protected when UV levels are three and above.

Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles, and for general health. So it's important to get some sun exposure when the UV is below three for vitamin D.

SUNSMART UV ALERT

You can see visible light (sunlight) and feel infrared radiation (heat), but you cannot see or feel UV radiation. UV can be high even on cool and overcast days, so don't rely on clear skies or high temperatures to determine when you need to protect yourself from the sun.

The SunSmart UV Alert is the best tool to help you know when to use sun protection. It indicates when UV levels are forecast to reach three and above (the level UV can start to do some damage). It also shows the times UV levels will be below three so you know when it's safe to get some sun for vitamin D.

The SunSmart UV Alert is available in the weather section of the newspaper, at sunsmart.com.au or as a free smart phone app.

In Victoria average UV levels are three and above from September to the end of April. That's when it's important to use the SunSmart Countdown and Slip! Slop! Slap! Seek! Slide! whenever you go outside.



From May to August in Victoria, average UV levels are below three. That's when it's time to get some winter sun for vitamin D. During these months sun protection is only needed when in alpine areas, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or if outdoors for extended periods.

VITAMIN D

The sun is the best natural source of vitamin D.

From September to April, most people with fair to olive skin need a few minutes of sun exposure to the face, arms and hands (or equivalent area of skin) in the morning or afternoon to help with their vitamin D levels. Children and families with naturally very dark skin need three to six times this exposure level.

From May to August in Victoria, when UV levels are usually low, people with fair to olive skin need two to three hours of sun exposure to the face, arms and hands (or equivalent area of skin) across the week to help with their vitamin D levels. Children and families with naturally very dark skin, need three to six times this exposure level.

If you are concerned about vitamin D levels see your doctor for advice.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20 or visit sunsmart.com.au. You can also speak to your doctor, community health worker or maternal and child health nurse.



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BE SUNSMART



DOING THE SUNSMART COUNTDOWN

Whenever the UV level reaches three and above use the five **SunSmart Countdown** steps. Never rely on just one sun protection measure – the best possible protection is when you use them all. Children are more likely to embrace these messages when all members of the family do the SunSmart Countdown. Be especially careful with babies under 12 months and keep them well shaded so they are not exposed to direct sun.

5 SLIP on some sun-protective clothing – that covers as much skin as possible

Choose tops with elbow length sleeves and, if possible, collars. Knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best. Pick lightweight, densely-woven fabrics that are loose fitting and won't make your child too hot.



4 SLOP on SPF30+ sunscreen – make sure it is broad spectrum and water-resistant

Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside and reapply it every two hours. Always check the expiry date and store it in a cool place. From three years of age, help your child learn to apply their own sunscreen. Children and families that have naturally very dark skin may not need to apply sunscreen.



3 SLAP on a hat – that protects the face, neck, head and ears

Wear a broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat. When choosing a hat consider its size and comfort, if it will obstruct vision or hearing, and safety. Many babies and toddlers do not like to wear hats. Persistence is needed to teach them that a hat is part of their outside routine – hat's on, fun's on!

Because baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck they are not recommended.



2 SEEK shade

Try to use shade whenever possible. Even in the shade, UV can reflect from surfaces such as sand and concrete so it is important that children continue to wear a hat, covering clothing and sunscreen.

1 SLIDE on some sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian Standards

Look for a label that says AS 1067 – preferably marked EPF (eye protection factor) 10. Choose sunglasses that are a close fitting, wrap around style that cover as much of the eye area as possible. If your child is reluctant to wear sunglasses, they can still protect their eyes by wearing a hat and staying in the shade.



Display this on your fridge or somewhere at home as a reminder.

Visit sunsmart.com.au to download a free copy of the SunSmart Countdown song or call 13 11 20 for more information.