

Be sun smart this summer



Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays is the number one cause of skin cancer. Exposure to sun also causes premature ageing of the skin, eye damage, and is the cause of most of the wrinkles and age spots on our faces.

Most importantly, skin cancer is largely preventable if you protect yourself and your family from the sun at an early age and then follow these practices consistently.

Here are some useful tips on how to protect yourself and your family this summer:

- Limit your outdoor activities and that of your family's between 10a.m. and 2p.m. in the summer months. Aim to do any outdoor activities in the early morning or late afternoon.
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen, one that protects against UVA and UVB with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Also, reapply sunscreen every two hours, especially after swimming or heavy perspiration.
- Wear protective clothing including a wide-brim hat, and keep your skin covered as much as possible.
- Wear sunglasses with total UV protection. Sunlight is the primary source of UV radiation that can damage the eye. Results from dozens of studies suggest that spending long hours

in the sun without eye protection increases the chances of developing eye diseases, including cataracts.

- Seek out shade whenever you can and always drink plenty of water when working or playing outdoors in hot weather.
- Some drugs such as Tetracycline and certain diuretics may increase susceptibility to sunburn because they contain substances that cause the skin to absorb more of the sun's radiation. These photosensitivity reactions may also be caused by birth control pills. If you are taking any medications, you may want to discuss this with your doctor before you go on holiday.
- Always avoid tanning beds as they can increase your risk of skin cancer.

Remember that you can get sunburn on a cloudy day - clouds and particulate matter in the air scatter sunlight. Therefore, you may receive a surprise sunburn even on a cloudy day.

Be a good role model and encourage skin cancer prevention habits in your family.