

Let's stay safe in the sun

Three steps
to cut your
skin cancer
risk

It's important to enjoy the sun safely and know when and how to protect your skin from sun damage.

Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or sunbeds is the main cause of skin cancer. The sun is often strong enough to cause skin damage between mid-March and mid-October in the UK, even when it's cloudy or cool.

So, here's how to be safe in the sun and protect your skin from damage.

01. Think about your skin

You know best how your skin reacts to the sun. You should take more care in the sun to avoid sunburn if you have:

- skin that burns easily
- a lighter skin tone
- lots of moles or freckles
- light hair or eyes

Remember, sunburn is not always peeling skin. For people with darker skin tones, your skin might feel tender or itchy. For people with lighter skin tones, it might also go red or pink.

Vitamin D

A bit of sun can help our bodies to make vitamin D, which is important for things like healthy bones.

Whatever your skin tone, there's no need to sunbathe or risk sunburn to get vitamin D.

02. Check the UV Index before going outside

The UV index tells you how strong the sun's rays are. The risk of sunburn increases as the UV level goes up.

If it's 3 (moderate) or higher, think about protecting your skin, especially if you get sunburnt easily. You can still burn when it is cloudy or cool.

You can find the UV index on weather forecasts on TV and phone apps.

The UV Index

- **1–2:** Low UV level.
- **3–7:** Moderate to high UV level. Be sun safe and consider protecting your skin.
- **8–9+:** Very high UV level. Everyone should protect their skin.

Top tip: try the 'Shadow Rule'

When your shadow is shorter than you, it means the sun's UV rays are at their strongest.

This is when you're more likely to burn and need to think about protecting your skin.

03. Sun safety: use shade, clothing and sunscreen

Be sun safe by using these three methods together:

- **Spend time in the shade**, especially between 11am and 3pm in the UK. Take a break under umbrellas, trees or structures. Or head indoors for a while!
- **Cover up with clothes, a hat and sunglasses.**
Wear loose clothing that covers your shoulders. The more skin that's covered, the better the protection.
Pair it with a wide-brimmed hat that covers your face, ears and neck, and UV-protection sunglasses.
But remember: UV rays can get through some fabrics and reflect off the ground, so think about shade too.
- On the parts you can't cover, **use sunscreen with at least SPF30 and four or five stars.**
Apply it thickly and evenly on the parts you can't cover with clothes. And remember to reapply often! Sunscreen doesn't give 100% protection, so shouldn't be used to stay out in the sun for longer.

Around 4 in 10 cases of cancer in the UK could be prevented

That's why we're supporting people to reduce their cancer risk.

Our leaflets guide you through the changes you can make and are based on quality research carried out over many years.

How to find out more:

Visit our website

You can find out more about UV and cancer at www.cruk.org/sun

If you're thinking about making changes to improve your health and reduce your cancer risk, get information and tips at www.cruk.org/health

Give us a call

Speak to a nurse for advice or support on our free Nurse Helpline. Just call **0808 800 4040**.

If you have any questions about Cancer Research UK or would like to support our work, call **0300 123 1022**.

Ref: ED089C September 2023

Due for review by: September 2026.

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