

Let's stay safe in the sun

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

Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or sunbeds are the main cause of skin cancer. And even in the UK the sun can be strong enough to burn.

Sunburn can easily catch you out. And you need to take even more care in the sun if you have pale skin, lots of moles or freckles, light or red hair, or light-coloured eyes.

Four ways to cut your skin cancer risk



1. Know your skin

You're the best person to know how your skin reacts in the sun. The more easily you get sunburnt, the more careful you need to be. Remember, sunburn is not just peeling skin, if your skin's gone red or pink in the sun, that's sunburn. For people with darker skin it just might feel irritated, tender or itchy.



2. Check the UV index before leaving the house

This tells you how strong the sun's rays are. The higher the number, the less time it'll take to damage your skin. If it's 3 or higher, take care and protect your skin, especially if you get sunburnt easily. The UV index is on weather forecasts, apps or you can check [metoffice.gov.uk/uv](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/uv)

	UV Index	
✓	1	You can safely stay outside.
	2	
!	3	Risk of sunburn. Sun protection is needed. Take care around the middle of the day (11am-3pm in the UK).
	4	
	5	
!!	6	
	7	
!!!	8	High risk of sunburn. Sun protection is important for all skin tones.
	9	
	10	
!!!!	11+	



Vitamin D – strike a balance

Vitamin D helps build and maintain strong bones – and we all need some sunshine to make it. So there's no need to avoid the sun altogether.

People with darker skin might need longer in the sun to get vitamin D, but they also have a lower risk of sunburn.

Short breaks in the sun should be enough for most people – **minutes, not hours**. The NHS recommends everyone thinks about taking vitamin D supplements from October until the end of early April.



3. Use shade, clothing and sunscreen

Don't let sunburn catch you out!

When the sun is strong:



Enjoy the cool of the shade

Take a break under umbrellas, trees or canopies, or just head indoors. UV rays can go through some fabrics and shade structures. Ensure skin is covered with clothing and sunscreen on areas you cannot cover.



Cover up with clothes, a hat and sunglasses

A long-sleeved top or t-shirt helps protect your skin. Pair it with a hat that has a wide brim which covers your face, ears and neck. Sunglasses will help too – particularly a UV protective pair.



On the parts you can't cover, use sunscreen with at least SPF15 and a rating of four or five stars

Don't be shy with it – apply thickly and evenly and remember to reapply often to get the level of protection on the label. Sunscreen alone doesn't give 100% protection, so it doesn't mean you're safe to stay out in the sun for longer.

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

So we're supporting people to reduce their cancer risk.

Our leaflets guide you through the changes you can make and are based on a balance of all the scientific evidence. They're free to order online – just go to cruk.org/leaflets



4. Try the shadow rule

When your shadow is shorter than you, 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.

Teach the whole family this tip and enjoy the sun safely.



The sun is at its strongest between 11am and 3pm, from mid-March to mid-October

How to find out more

We're online...

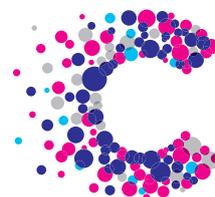


If you're thinking about making changes to improve your health and reduce your cancer risk, there's plenty of information and tips at cruk.org/health

...and on the phone



Our Nurse Helpline is there if you're looking for information or support. Just call **0808 800 4040**.



CANCER RESEARCH UK

Together we will beat cancer