

Prevention of skin cancer

Why?

- Australia has the highest incidence of melanoma in the world for males and females
- Skin Cancer is the most common form of cancer in Australia
- Skin Cancer accounts for 80% of all cancers diagnosed each year
- More than 430,000 Australians are treated for skin cancer every year
- It is estimated that over 15,000 new cases of melanoma will be diagnosed in 2019 (Australian Government Cancer statistics)
- Two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer before the age of 70
- If caught early, 95 per cent of skin cancer can be successfully treated

How?



The good thing about skin cancer is that it is largely preventable. According to cancer experts, the 'Slip Slop Slap Seek and Slide' message has helped Australia become the first country in the world to experience a reduction in skin cancer. Early figures show fewer Australians under the age of 45 years have been diagnosed with melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer, compared to the generation before them.

SLIP on protective clothing

The Australian/New Zealand Standard Sun protective clothing—Evaluation and classification (AS/NZS 4399) was introduced in 1996. This standard for sun protective clothing has three protection classifications depending on the amount of solar UV radiation blocked:

Classification	UPF rating
Minimum	15
Good	30
Excellent	50, 50+



If you work outdoors or take part in any outdoor activity you need clothing made from materials with UPF ratings of 50. UPF ratings of 50 and higher provide all-day sun protection even for people with fair skin.

Choose clothing that:

- Covers as much skin as possible, such as a long-sleeved shirt with a collar
- Is made from close-weaved materials such as cotton, polyester or linen. A good simple check for clothing is to hold it up to the light and see if you can see light coming through the weave. If light comes through, then it is unlikely to block all UV radiation
- Is dark in colour to absorb UV rays. Lighter colours will reflect the UV rays onto your exposed skin
- If used for swimming, wear material such as Lycra™, which stays sun protective when wet

SLOP on sunscreen.

What: The SPF of a sunscreen is a measure of how well it protects the skin from sunburn. For example, if skin protected with sunscreen takes 300 seconds to burn, but only 10 seconds to burn without sunscreen, the SPF is 300/10, which is 30. Remember, sunscreen simply extends the time before sunburn occurs so on high UV days seek shade! Make sure your sunscreen is **broad spectrum** (provides protection from UVA radiation as well as UVB) and water resistant. Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30+ or higher is advised.

When: The Cancer Council recommends using sunscreen every day on days when the UV index is forecast to be 3 or above (see below under 'Seek'). Sunscreen should be incorporated into your daily morning routine on these days.

How: Apply sunscreen to clean, dry skin at **least 20 minutes before going outside** (it takes this long to absorb and become effective) and reapply every two hours (whether or not the label tells you to do this). Using the right amount is important so **be generous**. The average-sized adult needs a teaspoon of sunscreen for their head and neck, each limb and for the front and the back of the body. That is about 35ml of sunscreen for one full body application.

SLAP on a hat

A broad brimmed or bucket style hat provides the ultimate protection for the face, nose, neck and ears which are common skin cancer sites. Caps and visors do not provide adequate protection.



SEEK shade

Make use of trees and man-made shade structures or bring your own (such as an umbrella). Whatever you use as shade, ensure it casts a dark shadow.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the invisible killer that you can't see or feel. UV radiation can be high even on cool and overcast days. This means you can't rely on clear skies or high temperatures to determine when you need to protect yourself from the sun.

The UV Index is reported daily by the Bureau of Meteorology. The alert identifies times during the day when the UV level is 3 or above and sun protection is needed.

As well as appearing on the [Bureau of Meteorology website](#), the alert is published in the weather section of daily newspapers, on Cancer Council Australia's [home page](#) and as an app for smartphones.

Download the SunSmart app for [iOS](#) or [Android](#) to keep track of the UV levels throughout the day.

SLIDE on some sunglasses

Sunglasses, in combination with a broad brimmed hat, can reduce UV radiation exposure to the eyes by up to 98 per cent. Choose close fitting sunglasses that meet the [Australia Standard AS 1067](#). It is estimated 20% of cataracts occur due to UV exposure to the eye. Remember, sunglasses are just as important for children as they are for adults.

INFORMATION REGARDING VITAMIN D

A little sun exposure is necessary for the production of vitamin D, which is essential to balance calcium levels and to make or maintain strong bones. However, regular use of sunscreens does not result in vitamin D deficiency in Australasia.

Please go to the link to see how you can get sufficient Vitamin D from sun exposure in Victoria.

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/vitamin-d>

FURTHER INFORMATION: 10 myths about sun protection from the cancer council

<https://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/10-myths-about-sun-protection.html>

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