

Skin cancer: Recommended lifestyle changes



In this article, you'll find ways protect yourself against the sun.¹ If you're not in the habit of doing any of these things, start by picking one from each category and using them in combination. Your best defense is across the board, meaning that you should practice as many of these good habits as possible. Sunscreen alone won't protect you against skin cancer. You want to combine sunscreen, proper clothing, and common-sense avoidance of strong sun.

Below are some tips to help you through organized company activities (in case you feel uncomfortable taking these precautions around co-workers). Remember, if you're standing out from the crowd by standing in the shade, you're setting a good example for others.

Sunscreen lotion

- Always keep sunscreen in your desk or locker at work. Don't store sunscreen in hot places, because extreme heat may ruin the protective chemicals.
- Remember to check:
 - the expiration date
 - sun protection factor (SPF) strength (probably somewhere between 15-30 based on your country's recommendation)
 - number of stars
 - broad spectrum (which provides protection against both UVA and UVB damaging radiation)
- Cover all exposed parts of your body, including your hands, neck, back of neck, and tops of your feet (if you're wearing sandals).

According to Cancer Research U.K., people often apply much less sunscreen than they should for effective protection. Their guide is:¹

 - About 2 teaspoonful of sunscreen to cover your head, arms, and neck
 - About 2 1/2 tablespoonful to cover your entire body
- Remember to reapply sunscreen regularly. Even "once a day" and "water resistant" sunscreen should be reapplied, as long as you're out in the sun. One recommendation is every two hours.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you're swimming, reapply sunscreen after you get back in the pool, especially after you've dried yourself off with a towel.
Scheduling activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't think of sunscreen as a way of staying out in the sun longer. The longer you stay in the sun, the more likely you are to get a sunburn (and remember that a sunburn means skin damage). • Try your best to avoid outdoor activities when the sun is strongest (usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.). • Consider suggesting alternative hours to avoid peak sun exposure or encourage co-workers to use the proper sunscreen or protective clothing. • Don't feel awkward about taking a "shade break." Find some shade and get partial relief from the sun's rays. Encourage co-workers to do the same. • If you know that you'll be out in an area without trees or other shelters, request that your supervisors or the event organizer bring umbrellas.
Sun protection clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the fabric of your clothes. The more you know about fabric weave, UPF protection, etc., the more comfortably you can dress, even at the beach! A long-sleeved, tightly woven linen shirt can be just as effective as a heavy shirt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tighter weaved fabric offers better protection against UV rays. – Darker colors absorb more UV rays than lighter colors. Vivid colors can also protect better than a pale color. But a pale color in the right weave, material, and weight can improve that protection.² – Consider buying clothing (hats, sunglasses, beach cover-ups, etc.) that's been treated for sun protection. Check the labels to make sure that these garments are designated as sun-safe clothing, with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating. • Consider wearing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A wide-brimmed hat with flaps around the ears and back of the neck to offer even better protection – Sunglasses to protect your eyes (yes, you can get cancer of the eye) and the skin around your eyes: Again, the recommendations may vary from country to country. In the U.K., for example, look for sunglasses that have the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'CE Mark' and British Standard ▪ UV 400 label ▪ 100 percent UV protection written on the label or sticker

¹ <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/sun-uv-and-cancer/ways-to-enjoy-the-sun-safely>, April 2019

² <http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sun-protection/clothing/protection>, June 2019

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