

# SUN SAFETY FACT SHEET

## Risk Factors

### Personal

Research has shown that people with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop skin cancer. A risk factor is something that may increase the chance of developing a disease. While anyone can get skin cancer, people are more likely to develop skin cancer if they have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Fair skin
- Blue, green, or hazel eyes
- Light-colored hair
- Have many moles (over 50)
- Freckles
- Personal or family history of skin cancer
- A history of severe sunburns
- A tendency to burn rather than tan
- Outdoor worker

### Environment & Time

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation, a known carcinogen (cancer causing agent), can have a number of harmful effects on the skin. UV radiation is considered the main cause of non-melanoma skin cancers, including basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). The two types of UV radiation that affect the skin are UVA and UVB.

UVA rays, which are not absorbed by the ozone layer, penetrate deep into the skin and heavily contribute to premature aging. UVA rays account for up to 95 percent of the UV radiation reaching the earth's surface. Although they are less intense than UVB, UVA rays are 30 to 50 times more prevalent.

UVB rays, which are partially absorbed by the ozone layer, mostly damage the surface of the skin and are the primary cause of sunburns. Its intensity varies by season, location, and time of day.

UV rays linked to skin cancer development are more intense (destructive) under certain timeframes or conditions. UV radiation is more intense:

- From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- When there is a lack of thick cloud cover
- From mid-spring through mid-fall
- At higher altitudes

It is important to remember that outdoor work environments with surfaces like snow, water, sand, and glass can reflect UV rays toward people increasing the amount exposure.



Cover up!



Wear UV-protective sunglasses!



Seek shade!



Put on sunscreen!



## Risk Factors continued



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Wear UV-protective sunglasses!



Put on sunscreen!

### UV Index

The UV Index predicts the concentration of ultraviolet radiation in a given zip code on a given day. The higher the number, the stronger the UV rays will be. This Index can be identified on the Environmental Protection Agency's website: [www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex). A chart will explain the meaning of the number generated and offer tips for protecting yourself in accordance to the given UV Index.

### Avoid Heat Illness

In addition to UV rays, the sun emits heat which can increase body temperature to dangerous levels and can lead to heat illness. Most heat illnesses occur from staying out in the heat too long. In rare cases, overheating can cause death.

Heat-related illnesses include:

- Heatstroke - a life-threatening illness in which body temperature may rise above 106° F in minutes; symptoms include dry skin, rapid, strong pulse and dizziness
- Heat exhaustion - an illness that can precede heatstroke; symptoms include heavy sweating, rapid breathing and a fast, weak pulse
- Heat cramps - muscle pains or spasms that happen during heavy exercise
- Heat rash - skin irritation from excessive sweating

To minimize the risk, schedule heavier work during cooler periods of the day, take frequent work and water breaks, and avoid strenuous work until you get used to it.

To learn more about why and how to prevent heat illness, contact the California Department of Industrial Relations. Visit: [www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/HeatIllnessInfo](http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/HeatIllnessInfo).