

# Sun Safety Fact Sheet

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## Have Fun in The Sun (Don't Get Burned)!

### Helpful Sun Safety Tips

- Don't go outside between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. daylight savings time (10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Standard time).
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and clothes with a tight weave.
- Use sunglasses that filter at least 90 percent of the UV rays.
- Use a sunscreen SPF 15 or greater.
- Do a monthly mole check to catch melanomas in their early stages:
  - Look for changes in the size, shape, or color of the moles or any red patches.
  - Check your entire body, including between your toes and the soles of your feet.
  - Seek prompt treatment for suspicious pigmented lesions.

### The sun can cause three types of skin cancer:

- **Basal Cell Carcinoma:**  
Most common form. It looks like a clear spot or small bump that usually forms on the head, neck, or hand. Size can vary. It often erodes or bleeds easily.
- **Squamous Cell Carcinoma:**  
Can start as nodules or as a red, scaly area. These often develop on the lips, face or tops of the ears.
- **Malignant Melanoma:**  
Least common, but most deadly.

Use the **ABCD** rule in detecting a melanoma.

**Asymmetry:** One-half of a mole or birthmark does not match the other.

**Border Irregularity:** The edges are irregular, ragged, notched, or blurred.

**Color:** The color is not the same all over, but may have differing shades of brown or black, sometimes with patches of red, white, or blue.

**Diameter:** The area is larger than 6 millimeters (about the size of a pencil eraser) or is growing larger.

#### Prevention at a glance: "Do the SCHEGS"

The mnemonic "SCHEGS" embraces all elements of a comprehensive sun-protection program:

**S** = Sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher.

**C** = Clothing that is sun-protective

**H** = Hat with a wide brim all the way around

**EG** = Eyeglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays

**S** = Shade, especially between 10am and 4pm

### Did you know?

- There is no such thing as a safe tan. Having a tan is the skin's response to injury from ultraviolet (UV) light.
- The American Cancer Society estimates that about 47,700 new cases of melanomas will be diagnosed during the year 2000. Also about 1.3 million cases of nonmelanoma skin cancer are diagnosed each year.

- 95 percent of all skin cancers in the United States are attributed to exposure to ultraviolet radiation.
- One in 75 people will develop malignant melanoma in their lifetime.
- Skin cancer caught in the early stages has almost a 100 percent cure rate.
- The National Farm Medicine Center in Marshfield, Wisconsin screened 780 people and found that 24 percent of them had a pre cancerous condition.
- The Environmental Protection Agency predicts that for every 1 percent of depletion of ozone, there will be a 2 to 5 percent increase in squamous-cell carcinoma and a 1 to 3 percent increase in basal cell carcinoma.
- Tanning booths are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and can cause the following problems: Skin cancer, damage to the immune system and eyes, first and second-degree burns, and premature aging.
- 80 percent of our total lifetime sun exposure occurs in the first 18 years of life.
- Don't use tanning pills containing canthaxathin. These pills are **not** approved for use in the United States and they can kill you by destroying your white and red blood cells.
- Sun Protection Factor (SPF) is the number that reflects a product's ability to block ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation. It does not indicate an ability to block ultraviolet A (UVA) radiation.
- UVB rays affect the epidermis, the outermost layer of skin. UVA rays penetrate to the dermis and alter skin fibers, remove moisture and elasticity, and can enhance the cancer-causing potential of UVB rays. To block UVA rays, look for sunscreens that contain Parsol 1789 (avobenzone) or benzopheso. The product will be labeled "broad - spectrum".
- SPF 15 means the sunscreen will protect your skin 15 times longer from UVB than if sunscreen was not used. The actual amount of time will vary from person to person, their altitude and proximity to the equator.
- SPF 15 blocks 95 percent of the UVB wave-lengths. SPF 30 is NOT twice as good. It only provides another 3 percent of protection, but the additional protection is advisable.
- It takes 1 oz. of sunscreen to cover an adult. Sunscreen is **not** recommended for children less than 6 months old. Keep infants in the shade and covered up with clothing.
- Sunscreen should be applied 20 to 30 minutes before going out in the sun so it has a chance to bond with the skin.
- Consumer Reports says waterproof sunscreen is better than water-resistant sunscreen. It also says less expensive sunscreens are as effective as more expensive sunscreens.

For additional information see MU Guide Sheet G1966, contact your local Outreach and Extension Center or the MU Extension Rural Safety Program at 1.800.995.8503.

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