



TO YOUR HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

PROTECT THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

Now that summer is here it time to shine some light on UV safety. In fact, July is UV Safety Awareness Month!

Most of us love to take in some warm, sunny weather, but it's critical to protect your skin and eyes from the damaging effects of the sun. Unprotected sun exposure can cause:

- » Vision problems and damage to your eyes
- » Suppression of the immune system
- » Premature aging of the skin
- » Skin cancer

Fortunately, there are things you can do to minimize the risk that comes with sun exposure.

SIMPLE WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN

Wear sunscreen every day, in all weather and in every season. The sun can still damage your skin on cloudy days or in the winter. For this reason, it is important to stay protected throughout the year. Wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Make sure the label says "broad-spectrum", which means it protects against the sun's UVA and UVB rays. Put it on at least 15 minutes before going outside.

Apply and reapply sunscreen generously.

According to the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, most people apply only 25-50 percent of the recommended amount of sunscreen. When out in the sun, it's important that you apply at least one ounce (a palmful) of sunscreen every two hours. You should apply



it more often if you are sweating or swimming, even if the sunscreen is waterproof.

Wear sunglasses with total UV protection.

Look for labels that confirm the sunglasses offer total protection. You don't have to pay a fortune either—many sunglasses with total protection are very affordable.

Dress accordingly. Wearing a hat (preferably wide brimmed) or other shade-protective clothing can partly shield your skin from the harmful effects of UV ray exposure. Proper clothing may also include lightweight and "breathable" long-sleeved shirts and pants.

Avoid being out in the sun as much as possible from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The sun's glare is most intense at midday. If you are outside during these hours, try to find some shade to protect your skin.

Check your skin regularly so you know what's normal for you and to notice any changes or new growths.

Choose cosmetics and contact lenses that offer UV protection. You still need to use sunscreen and wear sunglasses with broad-spectrum sun protection.

If you're a parent, protect your child's skin and practice those habits together.

Don't use tanning beds!

By learning the risks associated with too much sun exposure and taking the right precautions, everyone can enjoy the sun and outdoors more safely. If you are having any problems after being in the sun, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider.



UV-A & UV-B—WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The sun emits radiation known as UV-A and UV-B rays. Both types can damage your eyes and skin:

- » UV-B rays have short wavelengths that reach the outer layer of your skin
- » UV-A rays have longer wavelengths that can penetrate the middle layer of your skin