

The background is a solid, vibrant yellow. Four teal-colored fern fronds are arranged around the central text, one in each corner, pointing towards the center. The fronds have multiple long, narrow leaflets.

SUMMER SUN ESSENTIALS

Foolproof Tips for Staying Safe in the Sun

TOTAL**WELL**NESS

Happy summer!

It's finally summer! That means cookouts, beach vacations, and relaxing by the pool. Not many people will argue that there's a better way to celebrate the summer season than by spending more time outdoors and enjoying some sunshine. However, with the summer season comes some responsibility to take care of yourself – especially your skin.

Too much time in the sun can lead to wrinkles, premature aging, and even skin cancer. While sunburns might not seem like a big deal, they can do a lot of damage in a short amount of time. On average, about half of the U.S. population experiences a sunburn at least once a year. This means that many Americans aren't practicing essential sun safety rules.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. It's estimated that nearly 9,500 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with it every day, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. And according to the Skin Cancer Foundation, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70.

These statistics show that many Americans aren't doing enough to protect their skin and their overall health. We created this sun safety guide to educate you about the importance of sun protection, as well as share some tips on how to have a safe summer.

In this guide you'll learn:

- Best practices for sun safety
- How to choose the best sunscreen
- Common risk factors for skin cancer
- Tips for skin cancer prevention

Plus, we also included a printable tip sheet for employers to pass around the office to help educate their employees on the importance of sun safety.



SUN SAFETY HABITS

While we all know that sunscreen is an effective method of protecting your skin, sometimes it's not enough. In addition to applying and re-applying sunscreen throughout the day, here are some other ways to stay safe in the sun:



Cover up. Proper protection from the sun includes wearing protective clothing. Long sleeves, wide-brimmed hats, and breathable pants will help protect your skin from harmful UV rays. Layers are your best friend during the summer!



Check the UV index. Make it a habit to check the UV index every time you check the weather forecast for the day. This will help you gauge how much time in the sun is safe for the day. The UV index scale ranges from 1 – 11+, with 3 to 5 considered as “moderate,” 6 to 7 considered as “high,” 8 to 10 considered “very high,” and 11 or more considered as “extreme.” Remember that the UV index can still be high even on a cloudy day!



Watch the clock. It's important to limit your direct exposure to the sun – especially during peak sun times. UV rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you need to be outside during this time, try your best to seek shade and wear protective clothing.



SUN SAFETY HABITS, CONT.



Load up on antioxidants. Research found that a diet rich in antioxidants could help protect against sun damage. Antioxidants help slow down skin damage and aging caused by the sun. Foods like berries, dark chocolate, salmon, green tea, and carrots all contain a big dose of these powerful antioxidants.



Be aware of your medications. Certain medications cause increased sensitivity to the sun and make you more susceptible to burn. Antibiotics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen, naproxen, etc.), antifungals, antidepressants, and certain acne medications can cause a reaction to the sun. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if one of your prescriptions requires you to take extra precaution in the sun.



Protect your eyes. Don't forget about your eyes! Your eyes can suffer major damage from the sun as well. Extended exposure to UV rays and other radiation from the sun is linked to vision problems such as cataracts, corneal sunburn, and pterygium. Wear protective sunglasses that block at least 99% of UV light. It's always best to check with an eye doctor to find protective eyewear.



Don't ignore your sunburn. If you do get sunburned, it's essential to properly treat it. Stay hydrated, take a cool bath, and apply moisturizer regularly – as it's important to keep the skin moisturized. You can also use an over-the-counter hydrocortisone to help with the itching. Always be sure to stay out of the sun as much as possible while your sunburn is healing.



CHOOSING THE BEST SUNSCREEN

While sunscreen should be used year-round, it's even more important to apply sunscreen during the summer months when the sun's rays are stronger. Applying sunscreen is one of the most effective ways to protect your skin from sun damage. However, not all sunscreens are created equally. With so many different lotions and sprays on the market, it can be tricky to decide which sunscreen is the best choice.

Here are a few tips for picking out the best sunscreen, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines:

Choose a sunscreen with “broad-spectrum” protection. Not all sunscreens are broad-spectrum, so check for this on the label. Only sunscreens with broad-spectrum protection will provide full protection from UV radiation – protecting you from both UVA and UVB rays.

Choose a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. You'll likely see a wide range of SPF values while shopping for sunscreen. According to the FDA, the SPF value indicates the amount of sunburn protection provided by the sunscreen. They recommend that you choose a sunscreen with a level of SPF 15 or higher. However, the FDA recommends that those with fair or light skin tones choose a sunscreen with an SPF level of 30 to 50.

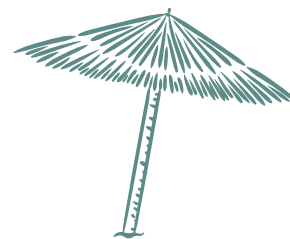
Stay mindful of ingredients. Some sunscreens contain unnecessary ingredients. It's important to check the label and do a bit of research on the ingredients before you buy. The FDA created this list of acceptable active ingredients in products labeled as sunscreen:

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Aminobenzoic acid | • Homosalate | • Octyl salicylate | • Sulisobenzene |
| • Avobenzone | • Menthyl anthranilate | • Oxybenzone | • Titanium dioxide |
| • Cinoxate | • Octocrylene | • Padimate O | • Trolamine salicylate |
| • Dioxybenzone | • Octyl methoxycinnamate | • Phenylbenzimidazole sulfonic acid | • Zinc oxide |



QUICK SUNSCREEN TIPS:

- Always read the label. It's important to know what ingredients your sunscreen includes, as well as the SPF and sun protection claims.
- If you choose a spray-on sunscreen, be sure to rub it in after spraying. If you don't, you'll be left with streaky protection.
- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before sun exposure. This will allow the ingredients to fully penetrate the skin and provide optimal protection.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or as directed by a healthcare professional.
- Pay attention to expiration dates – sunscreen loses a lot of potency when it's expired!
- Be sure you apply SPF under your makeup every day. Makeup isn't enough to protect your face from the sun.
- When it comes to sunscreen, less is never more! Be sure to slather on enough sunscreen to cover your whole body.
- There's really no such thing as "waterproof" sunscreen. Sunscreen can claim to be "water resistant", but this isn't the same as waterproof. It's especially important to reapply your sunscreen every 40 to 80 minutes when swimming.
- Don't just rely on sunscreen! Be sure to practice other sun safety tips like wearing protective clothing, avoiding the sun during peak times, and protecting your eyes.
- Never store sunscreen in direct sunlight.
- Use a lip balm that contains sunscreen with an SPF level of at least 30 to protect your lips.
- Apply sunscreen even when it's cloudy out!



SKIN CANCER RISK FACTORS

Although skin cancer can be a difficult topic to discuss, it's vital that you understand the risk factors, warning signs, and prevention practices of skin cancer. Being educated will help you better protect yourself – and your family – from the most common type of cancer in the U.S.

So, what exactly *is* skin cancer?

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), skin cancer starts in the cells of the skin. There are three main types of skin cancers:

- Basal cell skin cancers (basal cell carcinomas)
- Squamous cell skin cancers (squamous cell carcinomas)
- Melanomas

Basal and squamous cell cancers are the most common type of skin cancers, and are strongly related to a person's sun exposure. While these cancers are not as aggressive as melanomas, they can still be life-threatening if they are not found and treated right away.

Melanoma cancers are less common than basal and squamous cell cancers, but they are much more dangerous. According to the ACS, melanoma can almost always be cured in its early stages. But if it's left untreated, it can spread to other parts of the body – making it difficult to treat.

Although it's less common, melanoma rates are rising. In fact, melanoma diagnoses are up 7% since 2014, and one person dies of melanoma every hour. These statistics seem scary, but they should give you more reason to practice healthy sun habits.



SKIN CANCER RISK FACTORS, CONT.

There are other common risks of skin cancer along with sun exposure. According to Cancer Treatment Centers of America, some risk factors of skin cancer include:

Age. Skin cancer risks continue to increase as you age – most likely due to accumulated exposure to the sun.

Gender. Men are twice as likely to develop basal cell carcinomas and three times more likely to develop squamous cell carcinomas than women.

Skin tone. Certain skin tones increase your risk of developing skin cancer. Those with blonde or red hair, blue or green eyes, or with skin that burns or freckles quickly have a higher risk of developing skin cancer. If you're not sure which skin type you are, check with your doctor or hop online to take the [Fitzpatrick Skin Type quiz](#).

Moles. Many of the moles on your body are harmless, and will most likely never develop into cancer. However, having a large number of moles can increase your risk for developing melanoma. That's why it's important to get your moles regularly checked by a healthcare professional.

Family history. If your parents or siblings have had skin cancer, you might be at an increased risk. Those who have been previously diagnosed with skin cancer are also at a higher risk of developing it again.

Smoking. If you smoke cigarettes, you're more likely to develop squamous cell skin cancers – especially on the lips – than non-smokers.

Chemical exposure. Those with regular exposure to certain chemicals – like arsenic, industrial tar, coal, and certain types of oil – are at a higher risk of developing non-melanoma skin cancers.

Previous medical treatment. Past radiation treatment or psoriasis treatments can both lead to an increased risk of developing skin cancer.



SKIN CANCER PREVENTION

While skin cancer is the most common type of cancer, the good news is that it's also the most preventable type of cancer. In most cases of skin cancer, the cancer is caused by sun exposure and skin damage from UV rays. To help reduce your risk of developing skin cancer, you should:

Always practice safe sun habits. Use sunscreen properly, limit your sun exposure, and wear protective clothing and glasses. Protecting your skin from the sun's harmful UV rays is the best way to prevent skin damage.

Never use tanning beds. Tanning beds are extremely dangerous. The exposure to the ultraviolet light from tanning beds causes premature skin aging and can significantly increase your risk of developing skin cancer. If you can't resist the look of a "summer glow," try spray tanning or self-tanning lotions instead. A summer tan isn't worth the risk of cancer!

Perform self-exams. Check your skin regularly to see if you have any new, abnormal sunspots, growths, or changes in your moles. If you notice anything suspicious, see your dermatologist right away. You're much more likely to fully recover if skin cancer is caught in its early stages.

Schedule regular checkups. While self-exams are a helpful strategy, it's always best that you get checked at least once a year by a dermatologist. They can examine you for any suspicious changes in your skin. Be sure to also see a dermatologist ASAP if you're experiencing any of these warning signs of skin cancer:

- An open sore that fails to heal
- New moles
- Moles changing color, size, texture, or shape
- Large brown spots
- Bleeding or oozing sore
- Scaly patches or red bumps



1 IN 5 Americans will develop skin cancer before the age of 70.





SUN SAFETY QUICK TIPS:

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in America. In fact, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70. But the good news is that skin cancer is also the most preventable type of cancer. With proper habits and an understanding of skin cancer prevention, you can enjoy your summer with peace of mind that you aren't damaging your skin.

Some quick tips to keep you safe in the sun include:

- Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher (30 or higher for fair skin tones).
- Stay out of direct sunlight during peak hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Wear sunglasses that block at least 99% of UV light.
- Avoid tanning beds.
- Layer up with protective clothing – long sleeve shirts, wide-brimmed hats, and loose-fitting pants.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours, or every 40-80 minutes when swimming or spending time in water.
- Schedule regular checkup appointments with your dermatologist.

Have a healthy summer!

The summer season is a great time to explore the outdoors, go on new adventures, and enjoy a well-deserved vacation. By adding in some healthy sun habits into your daily routine, you don't have to spend your summer worrying about damaging your skin. We hope this sun safety guide has helped you learn how to stay safe this summer and help reduce your risk of skin cancer.

Want to do more to help your employees live a healthier and happier lifestyle? Give us a call or find us online! Keep up with our blog and follow our social media pages for more tips, ideas, and general info about living your healthiest life.

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