

## Sunscreen Tips

\* When shopping for a sunscreen, don't assume the most expensive brand is the best. Chemical ingredients in all sunscreens provide basically the same effect.

\* For sunscreen to be effective, slop it on generously 20 minutes before going outside. This gives the protective elements in sunscreen time to bond to your skin. Don't rub it in completely – a light film should stay visible. Re-apply the lotion every two hours, or more regularly if you are swimming or sweating a lot.

\* Using SPF 30+ instead of SPF 15+ does not mean you can safely double the amount of time you spend in the sun. Never use sunscreen to extend the amount of time you would normally spend in the sun.

\* If you react to sunscreen, try one formulated for sensitive skin. The health benefits of using sunscreen considerably outweigh any problems that may be caused by the chemicals it contains.

Source: [www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)

**Keep your cool this summer with the new Summer Sense booklet. Visit us at [www.healthworks.com.au](http://www.healthworks.com.au) for details.**

Focus on the good: Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.

Maori Proverb.

# SKIN SENSE

Over the summer months we all need to protect our skin from the sun, especially if our work takes us outdoors.

**H**ow up-to-date is your knowledge of the sun and its effects? Check it out with these facts and fallacies.

**FACT: you need more than sunscreen to give you total protection from the sun.**

Even with sunscreen, ultraviolet radiation will still get through to your skin. So, in addition to sunscreen:

- \* Wear proper outdoor work clothes. These should include a shirt made of tightly woven fabric with long sleeves and a collar.
- \* Protect your head with a broad-brimmed hat, or ask your employer to provide a helmet guard that fits over your hard hat.
- \* Protect your eyes. If your skin can burn, your eyes are at risk too, so you should wear sunglasses that meet with Australian Standard AS 1067.
- \* Rotate shifts or change work times if possible, so that you are not outside during the hottest part of the day – 11am to 3pm daylight savings time, or 10am to 2pm other times.

**FALLACY: getting sunburnt is the only cause of skin cancer.**

Skin cancer can also result from cumulative exposure to the sun.

Outdoor workers, for instance, suffer from a high incidence of *squamous cell carcinoma*, a skin cancer caused mainly by years of being outdoors. Most skin cancers occur in regions of the body frequently exposed to the sun: the hands, arms, head, neck, and shoulders.

**FACT: the more moles you have, the greater your risk of skin damage.**

People more susceptible to sunburn and sun damage have more moles on their skin than other people.

Dark or large moles are not a problem, unless they begin to increase in size, spread, or change colour. Check your skin at least twice a year, and more frequently if you are over the age of 50 or have had skin cancers removed.

**FALLACY: dark or olive skin doesn't need sun protection.**

While people with darker skin have naturally more protection against sunburn than those with fairer skin, they are still at risk of sun damage.

And whatever your skin tone, sun exposure will cause premature ageing, wrinkling, blotchiness, and sagging.

**FACT: on a fine, midsummer's day, you can get sunburnt in as little as 10 minutes.**

Even once you are out of the sun, sunburn symptoms can continue to develop for 24 to 72 hours.

If you do get sunburnt, sponge the area with a cloth soaked in saline (salt and water solution), and avoid further sun exposure until healed. Aloe vera gel straight from the plant or purchased aloe vera lotion, can also help reduce the symptoms.

Although unsightly, skin peeling is your body's way of getting rid of damaged skin cells that could potentially develop into cancers.

**FALLACY: you won't get sunburnt on a cloudy day.**

As much as 80 per cent of the sun's radiation shines through cloud, so don't get lulled into a false sense of security.

Source: *Heat & Sun Safety Booklet (now updated to the Summer Sense Booklet)*, published by Healthworks.

