



# Sun smart

## Simple ways to protect your skin

Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in the United States. In fact, more people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year in the U.S. than all other cancers combined. At least one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70. By taking steps to protect your skin from the sun, you can greatly reduce your risk of sun damage and skin cancer.

### Protect your skin from the sun with:



#### Shade

You can reduce your risk of sun damage and skin cancer by staying in the shade under an umbrella, tree, or other coverage especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.



#### Hats

Wear a hat that has a brim all the way around that shades your face, ears, and the back of your neck. A tightly woven fabric, such as canvas, works best to protect your skin from ultraviolet (UV) rays.



#### Sunglasses

They protect your eyes from UV rays, reduce the risk of cataracts and protect the tender skin around your eyes from sun exposure.

Sunglasses that block both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays offer the best protection.



#### Clothing

It is the most effective form of sun protection. Long sleeves and long pants or skirts are best. Darker colors and tighter weaves provide more protection than lighter colors and loose weaves.



#### Sunscreen

Currently, the American Academy of Dermatology recommends daily use of a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Reapply every two hours and after sweating or swimming.

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## How does sunscreen work?

The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) number in a sunscreen tells you how long the sun's UV radiation would take to redden your skin when using the product exactly as directed versus the amount of time without any sunscreen. So ideally, with SPF 30 it would take you 30 times longer to burn than if you weren't wearing sunscreen.

The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends a water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher for any extended outdoor activity. Regardless of the SPF, though, it's important to apply one ounce (two tablespoons) 30 minutes before going outside and reapply it every two hours or immediately after swimming or sweating.<sup>2</sup>



### Early detection is key.

When detected early, the five year survival rate for melanoma is 99%.

Skin cancer affects people of all races, and people of color are often diagnosed at a later stage, leading to worse outcomes. Take precaution by doing a monthly skin self-exam and seeing a dermatologist annually (or more if you notice anything on your skin changing, bleeding, or itching).

You can search for a dermatologist at [ExcellusBCBS.com/FindADoctor](https://www.excellusbcbs.com/FindADoctor) or by logging in to your online account.



#### Sources

<sup>1</sup> [CDC.gov/skin-cancer/sun-safety/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer/sun-safety/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> [SkinCancer.org/blog/ask-the-expert-does-a-high-spf-protect-my-skin-better/](https://www.SkinCancer.org/blog/ask-the-expert-does-a-high-spf-protect-my-skin-better/)