Clear Skin and Vision

National UV Safety Month

Consider these statistics:

- Every year, more than 50,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer.
- More than 1 million people in the United States are diagnosed with less serious forms of skin cancer each year.

Ultraviolet (UV) rays (see WHAT ARE UV RAYS?) can permanently harm both skin and eyes. There’s nothing wrong with enjoying a warm, sunny day, but you need to know that whether you are working or playing, too much exposure to sunlight can have serious health effects.

You probably know that too much sun can cause skin cancer and skin aging. But you may not realize that sunlight can also cause eye damage—it has been linked to cataracts and other eye ailments. It’s also possible for eyes to become “sunburned”—not necessarily a serious condition in itself, but one that could contribute to eye problems later in life.

All of these facts make it essential for you to take proper precautions when you are out in the sun:

- Check the UV index online, on the TV weather forecast, or in the newspaper, and be especially careful when the index is high.
- Wear a brimmed hat and sunglasses that filter out UV rays.
- Cover up with a long-sleeved shirt and long pants made of a tightly woven fabric for the best skin protection if you burn easily or are outside for long hours.
- Always use a broad-spectrum sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher to protect against both UVA and UVB rays. And reapply according to directions on the label.
- Apply lip block as well, because the lips are also sensitive to UV light and lip cancer is a growing health concern.
- Avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when UV rays are strongest.
- Recognize that even on a cloudy day, UV rays still get through and present skin and eye hazards.
- Protect against glare from sunlight reflecting off water—wraparound sunglasses provide the best protection.

WHAT ARE UV RAYS?

And why are they hazardous? Ultraviolet light is a form of radiation that can penetrate and change skin cells. There are two types of UV rays to worry about: UVA and UVB.

UVA, the most abundant type, can penetrate beyond the top layer of skin and increase the risk of skin cancer and eye problems, such as cataracts and macular degeneration. UVB rays are less plentiful because more are absorbed by the ozone layer, and they penetrate less deeply into the skin. But they can still be damaging.

There’s a third type of UV ray called UVC. It’s the most hazardous, but the ozone layer absorbs it before it gets to Earth.

When do you need to protect against UV exposure? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, protection from UV rays is important all year-round, not just during the summer.

However, since most people spend more time outside in the sun during the summer, and since the sun’s rays are stronger at this time of year, the risks increase. Generally the greatest danger is between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on clear days.

But harmful UV rays can be a threat on cloudy and hazy days, too. And the risk also increases any time you are somewhere like the beach or pool, where UV rays reflect off water, sand, and concrete. For most people, the risk of overexposure occurs off the job.

But if your job duties involve outdoor work, you need to take precautions even during work hours. See Clear Skin and Vision for the safety measures to follow.
Are You Overheated?

**Know the symptoms—and the cures**

Enjoy the warm summer temperatures, but be careful when it gets too hot. Use this chart to recognize if you’re getting overheated whether at work or play, and take steps to cool down.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Symptom(s)</th>
<th>Cure(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heat Cramps</td>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Drink water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat Exhaustion</td>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>Move to a cool place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dizziness</td>
<td>Loosen clothes; apply cool compresses.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sweating</td>
<td>Drink water slowly.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moist, pale, flushed skin</td>
<td>Elevate feet 8–12 inches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heatstroke</td>
<td>Lack of sweating</td>
<td>Treat as a medical emergency.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High body temperature</td>
<td>Call for doctor immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dry, hot skin</td>
<td>Move to cool area immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chills</td>
<td>Use cool water to soak person’s clothes and body.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong rapid pulse</td>
<td>Fan the body.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Don’t give fluids if victim is unconscious.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A Good Night’s Sleep**

**Take the quiz**

1. Health experts say the average adult needs 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night. **T**  **F**
2. People who don’t get enough sleep are at greater risk of obesity and diseases like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, depression, and high blood pressure. **T**  **F**
3. The only reason for sleep trouble is failure to follow a bedtime routine. **T**  **F**
4. Which of the following are examples of unhealthy bedtime behaviors? a. Eating foods high in sugar or carbohydrates b. Smoking c. Using alcohol or sleeping pills regularly d. All of the above **T**  **F**
5. Many workers who sleep less than 6 hours a night report symptoms like difficulty organizing or failing to finish assigned tasks on schedule. **T**  **F**
6. Night shifts have been found to be particularly risky because they interfere with the body’s normal 24-hour sleep patterns. **T**  **F**
7. Shift work and long hours are associated with health and safety risks. **T**  **F**
8. Sleeping longer on the weekend will always make up for not getting enough sleep during the week. **T**  **F**
9. Create an environment that promotes comfortable sleeping. **T**  **F**
10. Planning the next day’s activities helps you fall asleep. **T**  **F**

**ANSWERS**