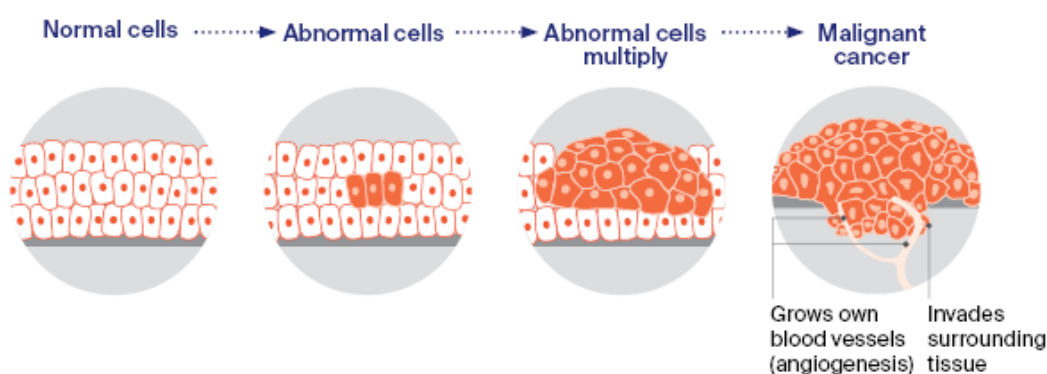


Be SunSmart

What is cancer?

Cancer is a disease of the body's cells. Normally, cells grow and multiply in a controlled way. However, sometimes cells become abnormal and keep growing. Abnormal cells can form a mass called a tumour. Cancer is the term to describe collections of these cells, growing and potentially spreading within the body.



When should I use sun protection?

Sun protection should be used any time the UV is 3 or above. The SunSmart Global UV app can indicate when you need to use sun protection. In Tasmania average UV levels are 3 and above from September through to April so sun protection is needed during these months. Outside of these times, sun protection is not required. If you work outdoors, are in alpine regions or near highly reflective surfaces, sun protection is needed all year round.

How can I protect my skin from the sun?

Slip on clothing that covers as much skin as possible.

Slop on broad spectrum, water resistant SPF50 (or greater) sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply at least every 2 hours. Apply at least a teaspoon of

sunscreen for each limb, front and back of the body and half a teaspoon for the face, neck and ears.

Slap on a hat that protects your face, neck and ears such as a broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaire style hat. Caps and visors do not provide adequate protection.

Seek shade from the sun wherever possible, especially between 10am and 3pm when the UV is at its peak.

Slide on sunglasses that are close-fitting, wrap-around, polarised and meet Australian standards (AS/NZS1067).

How can UV exposure increase cancer risk?

UV radiation can damage genetic material in our skin. This damage can cause cells to grow out of control causing skin cancer. Therefore, it is important to prevent damage caused by UV exposure by using the five sun protection measures of slip, slop, slap, seek and slide.

How does sunscreen work?

Cancer Council recommends using an SPF50 sunscreen that is broad-spectrum (which protects against both UVA and UVB radiation) and is water-resistant. SPF50 filters 98% of UV radiation with 1/50th (2%) reaching the skin. The ingredients in sunscreen work by scattering or absorbing UV radiation before it reaches the skin. This prevents UV-induced damage to skin cells and therefore cancer.

Are the chemicals in sunscreen safe?

All chemicals in sunscreen are regulated and approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). There is overwhelming evidence that sunscreens approved for use in Australia by the TGA are safe to use and are effective in preventing skin cancer. In addition, there is overwhelming evidence that exposure to UV causes skin cancer and that sunscreens are effective at preventing skin cancer.

What should I do if I have sensitive skin or adverse reactions to sunscreen?

It is recommended to look for sunscreens formulated for sensitive skin and perform a small patch test before using. This can be done by applying a small amount of the sunscreen to the inside of the forearm for a few days to check if the skin reacts. However,

sometimes this may not indicate an allergy, and it may occur after repeated use of the product. If a reaction occurs, you should stop using it immediately and consult your doctor if necessary. Seeing a dermatologist may be useful to identify the ingredient causing the reaction and help you choose a sunscreen that is suitable for future use.

What should I look for when checking spots on my skin?

We encourage people to be aware of what their body looks and feels like, and to visit their doctor if they notice any unusual changes. Everyone should become familiar with their skin. It is important to get to know your skin and what is normal for you, so changes will be quickly noticed. It is crucial to check all of your skin, not just sun-exposed areas.

Changes to look for include any change in shape, size or colour of a spot or mole, or the development of a spot or mole. If you notice any changes to your skin, we recommend seeing your doctor. It is also important to go to your doctor if a mole becomes itchy or bleeds.

Why are sunglasses recommended?

Sunglasses are an important sun protection strategy, and provide protection from cataracts, eye damage and skin cancer due to over exposure to UV. Cancer Council encourages all people, children and adults, to use them to protect their eyes.

Why can skin cancers occur in parts of your body that are not exposed to the sun?

While most skin cancers occur due to overexposure to UV from the sun, cancers can also occur due inherited genes, viruses, chemical or environmental exposures. It is very important to check areas that have not been sun exposed, such as between toes, soles of the feet and around the genitals.

What is the relationship between temperature and UV?

Cancer risk is purely related to UV exposure and not temperature. UV levels can be damaging on cool cloudy days and warm, sunny days.

Does the ozone layer contribute to higher UV levels?

The hole in the ozone layer is well south of Australia; it does not reach up as far as Tasmania. Fortunately, we do have some ozone to protect us throughout the year.

Does having darker skin reduce the need for sun protection?

Everybody, regardless of skin type or colour, is at risk of skin damage from exposure to UV radiation. People with naturally very dark skin are still at risk of skin damage and should be protected when UV levels are 3 and above.

Can using sunscreen cause a vitamin D deficiency?

The sun is the main natural source of vitamin D which is essential for bone and musculoskeletal health. Most people in Australia have sufficient levels of vitamin D. Given the harmful effects of overexposure to UV radiation, extended and deliberate sun exposure without any form of sun protection when the UV Index is 3 or above is not recommended. Sensible sun protection when UV is level 3 or above doesn't put most Australians at risk of vitamin D deficiency. If you are concerned about vitamin D deficiency, speak to your doctor to find out what options may be suitable for you.

When UV is below 3, you can help maintain vitamin D levels by being outdoors during the middle of the day with some skin exposed. Being physically active also helps to boost your vitamin D levels. When the UV is 3 and above, sun protection is the priority, and most people will receive enough vitamin D with just a few minutes of exposure.

Should sunscreen be applied to babies?

The widespread use of sunscreen on babies under six months is not generally recommended. Cancer Council recommends keeping babies under 12 months away from direct sunlight as much as possible when UV levels are 3 and above, as their skin is more sensitive than adults'.

Plan daily activities to ensure the baby is well protected from the sun and aim to minimise time outside during the middle of the day during the summer period when UV levels are strongest. When this is not possible, ensure that babies are protected from the sun by dense shade, protective clothing covering as much skin as possible and a sun safe hat. Check the baby's clothing, hat and shade positioning regularly to ensure he/she continues to be well protected from UV. When necessary, sunscreen may be applied to small areas of

skin not protected by clothing and hats. However, the widespread regular use of sunscreen is not recommended under 6 months old.

Where parents choose to use sunscreen occasionally on small parts of their baby's skin, they should be careful to choose a sunscreen that is suitable for babies - they may wish to seek the advice of a doctor or pharmacist. If your baby does suffer a reaction to a sunscreen, stop using the product and seek medical attention.

For more information

Visit our website <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety>

or contact our cancer prevention team at prevention@cancertas.org.au