Being SunSmart in Tasmania

Skin cancer

Skin cancer forms when skin cells are damaged by UV radiation penetrating the skin. All types of sunburn, serious or mild, can cause permanent skin damage and can lay the groundwork for skin cancer to develop later in life.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. At least two in three Australians will develop skin cancer before the age of 70.

Both tanning and sunburn increase your risk of skin cancer.

UV not heat, is what to beat

UV radiation comes directly from the sun

It can damage skin even on cool, cloudy days as it can pass through light cloud and is not fully filtered out by heavy cloud.

UV radiation can be scattered in the air and reflected by buildings, concrete, sand, snow and water.

UV levels are highest during the middle of the day. When the UV Index is forecast to be 3 or above, the SunSmart UV Alert with sun protection times, is issued for that day.

Check the daily sun protection times:
On the free SunSmart app OR online at www.cancertas.org.au/ OR www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv OR in the weather section of the newspaper

Vitamin D – what is it?

Vitamin D is a hormone that controls calcium levels in your blood. It is needed for healthy bones, muscles and teeth and for general good health. It is made in your body when your skin is exposed to sun (UV radiation). In Tasmania around 1 in 3 adults and teenagers are vitamin D deficient during winter.

Some foods such as oily fish and eggs contain small amounts of vitamin D, and margarine and some types of milk have vitamin D added. However it’s hard to get enough from food alone.

Only a certain amount of vitamin D can be absorbed by the body at a time. Being in the sun for a longer time doesn’t mean more vitamin D, but does mean a higher risk of skin cancer.

Being outdoors and active every day helps your body make vitamin D.

People who are born with very dark skin may need more sun exposure for their vitamin D needs. Skin types vary a lot and these recommendations may not suit everyone.

Please see your GP for advice that suits you.

# Cancer Council Tasmania wishes to acknowledge Cancer Council Victoria and VicHealth in the development of this resource.

Fact Sheet One – Being SunSmart in Tasmania v1 June 2015
When is sun protection needed in Tasmania?

From mid-September to mid-April

When average UV levels are 3 and above most Tasmanians need sun protection.

Ten minutes in the sun is recommended mid-morning (11am) or mid-afternoon (3pm) to as much skin as possible for vitamin D (at least hands and arms).

Take extra care in the middle of the day when UV levels are highest.

From mid-April to mid-September

When average UV levels are below 3 it’s safe to be out in the sun without a hat or sunscreen. To help maintain Vitamin D, most people need 30 minutes of midday sun exposure to face, arms and hands.

Wear a hat or sunscreen if you are near reflective surfaces or are outdoors for two hours or more.

For more information visit www.cancertas.org.au/healthyliving/sunsmart

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**When UV is 3 or above use these five steps together**

**Slip** on sun protective clothing
- Cover as much skin as possible.
- Long pants and shirts with a collar and long sleeves are best.
- Choose lightweight, closely woven material with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+.

**Slop** on minimum SPF30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen
- Apply generously to clean, dry skin 20 minutes before you go outside
- Reapply every two hours or more often when swimming or sweating.
- Check the expiry date.

**Slap** on a hat that shades your face, neck and ears
- Broad brimmed, Bucket or Legionnaire hats are best.
- Legionnaire hats need a flap that covers the neck and joins to the sides of the front peak.

**Seek** shade
- Staying in the shade is one of the best ways to reduce sun exposure.
- Make sure trees, shade structures or portable shade casts a dark shadow.

**Slide** on sunglasses
- Close fitting, wraparound style sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZ 1067:2003 - category 2, 3 or 4) are best.

**And always avoid sunburn!**