

Your Health Matters

In Queensland the levels of **ultraviolet radiation** (UVR) from the sun are high enough to damage your skin all year round. You can be exposed to UVR from the sun through everyday activities like walking to the shop, waiting for the bus and hanging out washing. This exposure adds up and increases your risk of developing skin cancer. Skin cancer is a serious disease that can cause disfigurement or death, but reducing your risk is easy.

Most of us know to 'slip slop slap', but did you know there are actually **five ways** to protect yourself from the sun?

- Slip on a shirt
- Slop on broad spectrum SPF 30 or higher sunscreen
- Slap on a broad-brimmed hat
- Seek shade
- Slide on some sunglasses



Clothing

Consider clothes made from a close weave cotton to allow the skin to breathe. Cotton clothing is also cool and comfortable to wear. To protect skin from UVR, clothing and swimwear need to have an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of at least 30 and swimwear with a minimum UPF rating of 50+ are recommended.

UPF ratings and protection categories:

- 15 - 24 UPF rating - 93.3 - 95.9% blocked (good protection)
- 25 - 39 UPF rating - 96.0 - 97.4% blocked (very good protection)
- 40 and over UPF rating - 97.5% or more (excellent protection)

Sunscreen

Apply water resistant, broad-spectrum SPF 30 or higher sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 2 hours and more regularly if swimming or sweating. Make sunscreen part of your morning routine. When buying sunscreen look for an 'Aust L' number on the label to ensure the product has been passed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Check the 'use by' date to ensure the product has not expired.

Don't leave sunscreen in hot places such as cars, as excessive heat can reduce its effectiveness. People who have had skin reactions to sunscreen should try a different brand. Look for products that are labelled as suitable for sensitive skin and fragrance free.

Hats

Shade your face, ears and neck with a hat. Choose a well-fitting broad brim hat which will protect the face and neck. Caps and visors are not recommended as they don't provide protection for the face, ears, and neck – places where skin cancers are often found.

Shade

Get in the shade when you can—seek shade under trees and buildings or bring an umbrella or portable shade structure.

Sunglasses

Wear sunglasses that meet Australian standard AS/NZS 1067:2003 and preferably have an Eye Protection Factor (EPF) of 10.

Choose sunglasses which protect the side of the eye as much as possible and fit closely on your face. Sunglasses prevent the formation of cataracts and other eye conditions later in life.

Sun safe ideas

- Think about what you're wearing – is your skin well covered?
- Always grab your sunglasses and hat before you go outside
- Walk on the shady side of the street
- Keep spare hats and umbrellas in your car or bag
- Plan your activities to avoid being outside in the middle of the day if possible

Check out this link to learn how to check yourself for melanoma (skin cancer)

https://www.melanoma.org.au/preventing-melanoma/how-do-i-check-myself-for-melanoma/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI3puG3bOJ5wIVRR0rCh3kaAGwEAAYAiAAEgJm5_D_BwE

Sources <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/environmental/sun/uv>
<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/environmental/sun/how>
<https://cancerqld.org.au>
<https://www.melanoma.org.au>



Stay Sun Safe,

