

Be SunSmart

Protect your skin when working outdoors



Reduce your risk of skin cancer by taking care in the sun, whatever the weather.

Facts about skin cancer:



- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland among both men and women. Over 11,000 new cases are diagnosed every year.
- Skin cancer is the most common cancer among 15-44 year olds in Ireland.
- Nine out of 10 cases are caused by the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays and can be prevented.
- Up to 90% of UV rays can pass through light clouds so it's important to take care on cloudy Irish days as well as sunny days.
- A tan or sunburn may go away but the damage to your skin remains. It builds up every year and can lead to skin cancer later in life.

Who's at risk?

We all need to protect our skin. People who spend most of their time working outdoors have a higher-than-average risk of skin cancer.



Take extra care if you:



- Have pale or freckled skin that does not tan or burns before it tans
- Have naturally red or fair hair
- Have blue, green or grey eyes
- Have a large number of moles (50 or more)
- Burn easily or have a history of sunburn
- Have already had skin cancer
- Have a close family member who has or had skin cancer

Follow the SunSmart Code to reduce your risk.

The SunSmart Code

Keep your hat and shirt on!

Cover up

- Wear a shirt with a collar and long sleeves.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat that gives shade to your face, neck and ears.

Seek shade

- Stay in the shade, especially between 11am and 3pm from April to September.

Wear wraparound sunglasses

- Make sure they give you 100% UV protection or are CE marked.

Slap on sunscreen

- Use water-resistant sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30+ and 100% UV protection or CE marked. Reapply every 2 hours.



Remember!

- Getting sunburnt at any age increases your risk of melanoma skin cancer, the most serious form of the disease. Never let your skin go red or burn.
- Frequent exposure to the sun (even if you don't burn) significantly increases your risk of skin cancer.
- A tan is not a sign of health. Tanned skin is damaged skin trying to protect itself from further UV damage that can lead to skin cancer.
- Never use a sunbed to get a tan.
- You can get a tan, red or sunburnt skin on cloudy Irish days as well as sunny ones, so protect your skin every day by following the SunSmart Code.

The UV index

Low risk		Medium risk			High risk		Very high risk		Extreme risk	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11+

Check the UV (ultraviolet) index from Met Éireann every day to see how strong UV radiation is. The higher the UV index number, the greater the chance of damage to your skin and eyes. If the UV index is 3 or more, you need to follow the SunSmart Code.

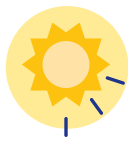
Organise your day

Reduce your risk of sun damage by sharing outdoor tasks so you are not in the sun every day when UV rays are strongest. They are strongest between 11am and 3pm (from April to September).



How does the sun damage your skin?

UV rays cause skin cancer, skin ageing, sunspots and eye damage.



Workplace chemicals and skin cancer risk

Some chemicals, such as creosote, make your skin more sensitive to UV rays. Don't let chemicals get on your skin as this can lead to sunburn, which increases your risk of skin cancer.

Make sure you read the safety instructions before using any chemicals.



Your employer's responsibilities

Your employer is required to provide a safe working environment for you. They should:

- Include sun protection advice as part of health and safety programmes.
- Remind you regularly about the dangers of the sun's UV rays when working outdoors by, for example, displaying posters and providing leaflets.
- Develop a UV protection policy to record how your workplace will manage your UV exposure risk at work. This may involve doing a risk assessment and providing sun-protective clothing, shade and sunscreen.

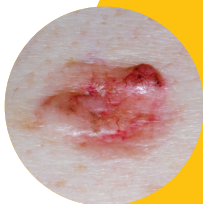


Protect yourself at work

- Follow sun / UV safety instructions and advice and take part in any sun protection education programmes.
- Let your manager or health and safety representative know if you do not have access to sun protective measures.

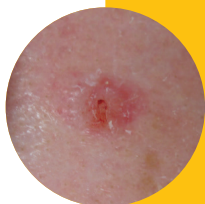


Types of skin cancer



Basal cell skin cancer

This is the most common type of skin cancer. It often appears as pearly or waxy bumps on the face, ears or neck. These bumps can form ulcers.



Squamous cell skin cancer

This type is more dangerous than basal cell skin cancer. It is often, but not always, red in appearance and can have a scaly or crusted surface. It commonly occurs on the face, ears, scalp, lips or hands.



Melanoma

This is the most dangerous type of skin cancer. It's quite rare, but more people are being diagnosed with it each year. Most – but not all – melanomas develop from moles. If this cancer is spotted early, it is very treatable. If not, it can spread to other parts of the body and can be fatal.

Images thanks to Dr Patrick Ormond and St James's Hospital

Check your skin



Get to know your skin and what is normal for you. Check it once a month for changes.

Basal cell and squamous cell skin cancers

Look out for:

- A small lump that is smooth, pearly or waxy
- A new growth or sore that does not heal in a few weeks
- Constant skin ulcers that are not explained by other causes
- A flat, red spot that is scaly, crusty or bleeding
- A lump that is firm, scaly or has a crusted surface, and may be sore
- Rough, scaly, irregular patches of skin

Melanoma skin cancer

Look out for:

- A new mole or a change in shape, size or colour of an existing mole
- A dark patch under your nail that gets bigger and wasn't caused by an injury

Also, speak to your doctor if your mole:

- Is bleeding, oozing or crusting
- Looks red and inflamed around the edges
- Starts to feel different, for example slightly itchy or painful

Some melanomas don't develop from moles, so speak to your doctor if you spot other skin changes that are unusual for you. Many skin changes will be harmless, but it's best to get any changes checked out. Melanoma has a very good chance of being successfully treated if diagnosed and treated early.

More information



Go to: www.cancer.ie/sunsmart

Talk to our cancer nurses

Call our Cancer Nurseline on **1800 200 700**, visit a Daffodil Centre or email us on cancernurseline@irishcancer.ie

Read our leaflets

Melanoma: What you should know

Non-melanoma skin cancer: What you should know

You can download them from our website www.cancer.ie or call our Cancer Nurseline for free copies.

