

## How does the sun damage your skin?

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



Tanned skin, not just sunburnt skin, is damaged skin. A tan is a sign that skin is trying to protect itself from more damage by UV rays.

## Skin cancer

There are different types of skin cancer:

**Basal cell and squamous cell skin cancer** are the most common types.

### Look out for:

- A new growth or sore that does not heal in a few weeks
- A spot or sore that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab or bleed
- Constant skin ulcers that are not explained by other causes.



Get to know your skin and what is normal for you. Check it often for any change.

**Melanoma skin cancer** is quite rare but greater numbers of people are being diagnosed with it each year.

- Melanoma is also the most serious form of skin cancer. If it is spotted early, it is very treatable. But if not it can spread to other parts of your body and can be fatal.

### Look out for:

- A new or changing mole
- The main changes are changes in: COLOUR, SHAPE OR SIZE

Find out more about melanoma in the Irish Cancer Society leaflet: Melanoma skin cancer: What you should know



Your can further reduce your risk of skin cancer by never using a sunbed to get a tan.

Many skin changes will be harmless. But, if you notice a change, or anything unusual for you, talk to your doctor or call the National Cancer Helpline, on **1800 200 700**, without delay.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are concerned about skin cancer or about cancer in general you can speak with a specialist nurse in confidence by calling the **National Cancer Helpline on 1800 200 700**.

The Helpline is open Monday–Thursday 9am–7pm; Fridays 9am–5pm.

Those who wish to speak to a specialist nurse can also contact us through our:

- **Walk-in service** – visit us in person at the Irish Cancer Society offices at 43/45 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4
- **Email service** – email us at [helpline@irishcancer.ie](mailto:helpline@irishcancer.ie)
- **CancerChat** – chat live on the web with a specialist cancer nurse at [www.cancer.ie](http://www.cancer.ie)
- **Message Board** – visit our online bulletin board at [www.cancer.ie](http://www.cancer.ie)

For more information on how to reduce your risk of skin cancer and how to spot skin cancer early go to [www.cancer.ie/sunsmart](http://www.cancer.ie/sunsmart)



The Health Promotion Department of the Irish Cancer Society has a wide range of leaflets and posters about a variety of cancers. To order them, please contact us on 01 231 0539.

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## Have fun and be Smart in the Sun



It's in your hands



## Reduce your risk of skin cancer by taking care in the sun

### SOME FACTS:

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland amongst both men and women
- There are just over 8,000 new cases diagnosed every year
- Nine out of every ten cases of skin cancer are caused by the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays and therefore can be prevented
- Up to 90% of UV rays can pass through light clouds
  - For this reason you need to take care on cloudy days too
- Children and babies have very sensitive skin which can burn easily
- A tan or sunburn may go away but the sun damage to your skin is permanent. It builds up every year and can lead to skin cancer in later life
- Protect yourself by following the SunSmart Code.

### Who is at risk?

Everyone who spends time outdoors is at risk, not just those who sunbathe. This includes people who spend a lot of time working or playing outdoors.

### 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.

 The Irish Cancer Society recommends that you use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and UVA protection.

## Follow the SunSmart Code

### SLIP ON SUN PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

- Wear a T-shirt with a collar
- Choose clothes with a close weave material



### SLAP ON A HAT

- Make sure it gives shade to your face, neck and ears



### SLOP ON SUNSCREEN

- With SPF 15 or higher and UVA protection



### SEEK SHADE

- Especially from 11am to 3pm – when UV rays are at their strongest
- Use a tree, a sun umbrella or other type of shade to protect yourself



### WEAR WRAP-AROUND SUNGLASSES

- Make sure they give UV protection – check the label



Using sunscreen is only part of the SunSmart Code. It is also important to cover up, seek shade and wear wraparound sunglasses to reduce your risk of skin cancer.

### What to watch for when buying sunscreen

- Always check that sunscreen protects you against both UVA and UVB rays
  - Watch for the UVA Logo on the bottle
  - SPF is about UVB protection: The higher the SPF the better. But using a higher SPF does not mean you can stay in the sun for longer. Also, no matter how high the SPF it does not block out all of the UVB rays.
- Use water resistant sunscreen, especially if swimming or at water sports



### How to use sunscreen

- Put sunscreen on dry skin 30 minutes before you go out in the sun
- Make sure to use lots and re-apply it every two hours
- Re-apply more often if sweating, swimming or towel drying
- Remember, those parts of the body that are not usually exposed to the sun will tend to burn more easily
- Be sure to take extra care of ears, neck, bald patches, hands and feet.



### SunSmart kids – why bother?

Children and young peoples' skin is more sensitive to damage from UV rays and they spend more time outdoors than adults. For this reason it is important to:

- Keep babies under 6 months in the shade
- Keep older children safe by following the SunSmart Code.

If possible, use a child's sunscreen and patch test it first. If their skin reacts to the product try a different brand.

Don't forget - all children, whether they tan easily or not, should always be protected - remember tanned skin is damaged skin.



Getting sunburnt in childhood increases the risk of skin cancer later in life.

### UV Index

#### How can it help you to protect your skin?

The UV Index tells us how strong UV radiation is on any given day.

- It ranges from 1 to 11+
- The higher the reading the greater the chance of damage to your skin and eyes
- The UV index can help you decide the type of sun protection to use
- If the UV index is 3 or more it is necessary to follow the SunSmart Code.

Find out today's UV index at [www.uvawareness.com](http://www.uvawareness.com)

UV Index										
LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	VERY HIGH RISK	EXTREME RISK						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11+