

How does the sun damage your skin?

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

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 once a month for change.

Melanoma skin cancer is quite rare but more people are being diagnosed with it each year. It has a very good chance of being cured if diagnosed and treated early. Most cases occur in moles.

Look out for a new mole or a change in shape, size or colour of an existing mole. Also, speak to your doctor if your mole:

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



As not all melanomas develop from moles it is important to speak with your doctor if you spot other skin changes that are unusual for you.

The different types of skin cancer

Basal cell skin cancer



This is the most common type of skin cancer. They often appear as pearly or waxy bumps on the face, ears or neck. They can become ulcerated.

Squamous cell skin cancer



More dangerous than basal cell skin cancer. They can spread through the body. They are often, but not always, red.

Melanoma



This is the most dangerous type of skin cancer. If it 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

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

Further Information

Go to: www.cancer.ie/sunsmart

For more information call the National Cancer Helpline on 1800 200 700. The Helpline is open Monday-Thursday, 9am-7pm, Friday 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 office at 43/45 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4
- **Email service** – helpline@irishcancer.ie
- **CancerChat** – live chat on the web with a specialist cancer nurse at www.cancer.ie
- **Message Board** – visit our bulletin board at www.cancer.ie.

The Construction Industry Federation is pleased to be associated with the work of the Irish Cancer Society in helping communities reduce their risk of cancer and spot it early.

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Be Smart

Protect your skin on building sites

in association with



It's in your hands



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



Follow the **SunSmart Code**
So keep your hat and shirt on!

Some facts about skin cancer:

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland amongst both men and women. Over 8,000 new cases are diagnosed every year
- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in 15-44 year olds in Ireland
- Nine out of ten 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 too
- A tan or sunburn may go away but the damage to you skin remains. It builds up every year and can lead to skin cancer later in life



Cover up...

By wearing a shirt with a collar and long shorts



Also wear a hat that gives shade to your face, neck and ears



Seek shade...

Especially from 11am to 3pm



Wear wraparound sunglasses...

Always carry your sunglasses
Make sure that they give UV protection



Slap on sunscreen

Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and UVA protection

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/burn
- 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 everyday by following the SunSmart Code



Who is at risk?

We all need to take care of our skin. Construction workers and their families, who spend most of their time working or playing outdoors, have a higher than average risk of skin cancer. Follow the SunSmart Code to reduce the risk.

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

SunSmart Kids – why bother?

While skin cancer is very rare in children less than 15 years old, children's skin is more sensitive to damage from the sun's UV rays than adult's skin. Sun exposure in childhood and adolescence sets the stage for skin cancer in later life. For this reason it is important to:

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



Protect all children, whether they tan easily or not, with the **SunSmart Code**



Chemicals used on building sites and skin cancer risk

Some chemicals that are used on building sites, such as creosote, make your skin more sensitive to UV rays. If used incorrectly they can lead to sun burn which increases your risk of skin cancer.

Make sure you read safety instructions before using any chemicals.

Organising your day

To reduce your risk of skin damage when at work organise your day around the sun's UV rays. To do this:

- Plan your jobs so that you are in the shade when UV rays are strongest – from 11am to 3pm
- Check the **UV Index** every day to help you plan to protect your skin from UV damage



Take extra care around midday

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

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



Find out today's UV Index across Ireland
www.cancer.ie/reduce-your-risk/sunsmart/uv-index



The higher the UV Index the greater the chance of damage to your skin and eyes.

If the UV Index is 3 or more it is necessary to follow the SunSmart Code.