

# Safety Matters

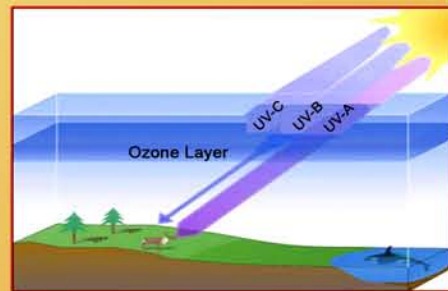
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## July is UV Safety Month!

We want to remind our readers about the dangers of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, and how to protect yourselves in the sun.

The sun emits radiation in the form of ultraviolet (UV) light, which is classified into three types by wavelength: UVA, UVB, and UVC. The ozone layer blocks all UVC light (shortest wavelength), but UVB and UVA light can pass through the atmosphere and reach Earth's surface.



### UVA versus UVB.

UVA penetrates deeply into the skin, and is the type of UV radiation that causes wrinkling or leathering of the skin (also called "photoaging"). UVB is the type of radiation that causes sun burns. Both types can cause skin cancer.



### How does UV radiation affect you?

UV radiation can have negative health effects which range from short-term effects, such as tanning and sunburns, to long-term effects such as skin cancer, blindness, cataracts, skin aging, growths on the skin, and suppression of the immune system.

### Who is at risk?

Although the sun can adversely affect everyone, some people are at a higher risk for skin cancer, such as those who spend excessive amounts of time in the sun, and those who get sun burns easily or frequently. It is also important to remember that everyone is equally at risk for eye damage due to overexposure to the sun's ultra violet radiation.

### When is UV radiation at its highest?

UV radiation is at its highest when and where the sun's rays are the strongest. This means that UV levels will be highest around noon on a clear sunny day, as well as during the summer months.

UV levels will also be highest near surfaces that reflect sunlight, such as snow, sand, or water. Radiation bouncing off a reflective surface is particularly dangerous because the reflection intensifies the light.



## How to stay safe in the sun.

### 1. Wear Sunscreen

All sunscreens products include an SPF, or sun protection factor. The SPF number is a measurement of the amount of UVB protection (there is currently no standard rating system that measures UVA protection). An SPF of 15 filters out about 93% of the UVB rays; SPF 30 filters about 97% of UVB rays. The beneficial effects of sunscreen decreases over time, so after a few hours the difference between the two may be even less.

### 2. Wear Sunglasses

UV rays can burn the cornea of your eyes, which can result in cataracts that may ultimately cause blindness. To protect your eyes, wear sunglasses that have 100% UV protection. Don't be fooled by how dark or how expensive the glasses are. Check the label to be sure.



### 3. Seek Shade

UV radiation is the strongest from about 10 am to 4 pm, as well as during the summer months. Seek shade during these times to protect yourself. If you must be outside, wear tightly woven clothing and a wide brimmed hat to reduce the amount of UV radiation coming into contact with your skin.

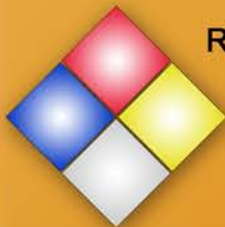
### 4. Check the UV Index

The UV Index ([www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html)) is a forecast that lets you know the predicted intensity of UV rays each day. Index levels range from 2 to 11+, where level 2 is low risk and levels 6 and above are high risk.

**Resources:** Visit the following websites to learn more about how you can protect yourself from harmful UV radiation, and reduce your risk of skin cancer and other skin and eye problems.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sunscreen/SN00044> <http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/>  
<http://www.nsc.org/ehc/sunSAFE.html> [http://www.cancer.org/docroot/lrn/lrn\\_0.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/lrn/lrn_0.asp)

Original content found at [http://www.earthgauge.net/wp-content/fact\\_sheets/EG\\_UV\\_Safety.pdf](http://www.earthgauge.net/wp-content/fact_sheets/EG_UV_Safety.pdf)



Comments and suggestions are always welcomed and encouraged.



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