

BE SUN WISE!

Listen to index reports. Take common sense precautions to avoid overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. Take special care with children, since they spend more time outdoors than adults and can burn more quickly. The simple actions listed above can reduce your risks of developing UV-related skin cancers and cataracts. Take the hurt out of fun in the sun!

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

For more information on the Experimental UV Index, please call: EPA Stratospheric Ozone Hotline: (800) 296-1996
The National Weather Service: (301) 713-0622

Medical and health organizations interested in this project, please contact the National Association of Physicians for the Environment, FAX (301) 530-8910

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS COLLABORATE TO BRING THIS MESSAGE TO YOU:

National Association of Physicians for the Environment
American Medical Association
Wilderness Medical Society
American Skin Association
American Academy of Dermatology
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Inc.
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Optometry
American Society for Head and Neck Surgery
American Optometric Association

American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons
Coalition of Patient Advocates for Skin Disease Research
Society for Investigative Dermatology
Skin Cancer Foundation
Friends of the Earth
National Medical Association
Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN)
Lupus Foundation of America, Inc.
Ozone Action, Inc.
Alliance for Environmental Education
Association of University Environmental Health Sciences Centers
Prevent Blindness America
Save Our Sky
North American Association for Environmental Education

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EPA The Federal Experimental Ultraviolet Index: What You Need to Know

UV INDEX



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Do you know that a few simple precautions can help protect you and your children from skin cancer and serious eye injury?

While some exposure to sunlight is necessary, too much can be dangerous, causing immediate effects like blistering sunburns and longer-term problems like skin cancer and cataracts. Overexposure also causes wrinkling and aging of the skin, and scientists are concerned that UV may even impair the human immune system.

The new Experimental Ultraviolet (UV) Index provides important information to help you plan your outdoor activities in ways that prevent overexposure to the sun's rays. Developed by the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the index is issued daily as part of a national experimental pilot project.

WHAT IS THE EXPERIMENTAL UV INDEX?

The Experimental UV Index describes the next day's likely levels of exposure to UV rays. The index predicts UV levels on a 0-15 scale in the following way:

| INDEX NUMBER | EXPOSURE LEVEL |
|--------------|----------------|
| 0 to 2 | MINIMAL |
| 3 to 4 | LOW |
| 5 to 6 | MODERATE |
| 7 to 9 | HIGH |
| 10 + | VERY HIGH |

While you should always take precautions against overexposure, you should take special care to adopt the safeguards recommended below when the index predicts exposure levels of moderate or above.

How MUCH UV AM I BEING EXPOSED TO?

UV exposure depends on many things. It varies with the time of day or season of year you are outdoors, latitude and with altitude. Although clouds do not eliminate exposure, they partially screen UV rays. By contrast, water, sand and snow all reflect UV rays, increasing exposure. Finally, people who work or play outdoors for long periods are at greater risk.

WHAT ARE PROPER PRECAUTIONS?

• PREVENTING SKIN CANCER

Skin cancer is rising in incidence faster than any other form of cancer. Over 1 million new cases of skin cancer are likely to be diagnosed in the U.S. this year. Protecting children is especially important, since early exposures will influence risks of later skin cancers. Doctors* recommend the following to reduce the risk of skin cancer:

- Minimize sun exposure at midday (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.).
- Apply a sunscreen with SPF-15 or higher to all exposed areas sufficiently for protection, especially after swimming, perspiring or sun bathing, even on cloudy days.
- Reapply your sunscreen every 2 hours.
- Wear clothing that covers your body and shades your face and neck.
- Avoid unnecessary exposure to radiation from sunlamps or tanning parlors.
- Protect children by keeping them from excessive sun during the hours of strongest sunlight and by applying sunscreen liberally and frequently to children older than 6 months of age.

* The American Academy of Dermatology and the Skin Cancer Foundation

• PREVENTING EYE DAMAGE

Because UV rays can cause cataracts and other serious eye conditions, doctors* recommend that you wear sunglasses that absorb 99-100 percent of the full UV spectrum when outdoors in bright sun. Because there is now no uniform labeling of sunglasses, read labels carefully. Be careful of buying sunglasses that "block harmful UV" without saying how much. Wear a hat with a wide brim to protect against UV exposure, and if you wear sunglasses too, you provide even more protection for your eyes. Parents whose children will not wear sunglasses can still help protect their children's eyes by making sure they wear a hat with a wide brim.

WHAT ROLE DOES OZONE-LAYER DEPLETION PLAY?

The stratospheric ozone layer shields the earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. It is well established that decreases in the stratospheric ozone far above us can lead to increases in UV at the surface. Ozone changes from day to day and place to place. Long-term decreases in the average amount of ozone have been measured over the past decade. A better monitoring network is necessary to demonstrate whether there has been a corresponding change in UV radiation in the U.S. Future levels of ozone and UV will depend upon a combination of natural and manmade factors, including CFCs. Experts agree that increased exposure to harmful rays can contribute to long-term increases in skin cancer and cataracts, and harm animals and plants. Current rising rates of skin cancer are likely related to the increasing emphasis on outdoor leisure and work in our society. Whatever the source of risk, it is important to protect yourself and your family from overexposure to harmful UV rays.

* Prevent Blindness America, the American Optometric Association, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology