



# Action Steps for Sun Protection

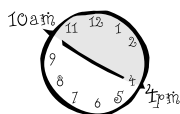
BE SUNWISE

While some exposure to sunlight can be enjoyable, too much can be dangerous. Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight can result in a painful sunburn. It can also lead to more serious health effects, including skin cancer, premature aging of the skin, and other skin disorders; cataracts and other eye damage; and immune system suppression. Children are particularly at risk of overexposure, since most of the average person's lifetime exposure occurs before the age of 18.

## Be SunWise

Most people are not aware that skin cancer, while largely preventable, is the most common form of cancer in the United States, with more than one million cases reported annually. By following a number of simple steps, you can still enjoy your time in the sun while protecting yourself from overexposure.

In cooperation with a number of leading public health organizations, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is providing these action steps to help you and your family be "SunWise." Other than staying indoors, no single step can fully protect from overexposure to UV radiation, so use as many of the following actions as possible.



### Limit Time in the Midday Sun

The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Whenever possible, limit exposure to the sun during these hours.



### Seek Shade

Staying under cover is one of the best ways to protect yourself from the sun. Remember the shadow rule: "Watch Your Shadow—No Shadow, Seek Shade!"



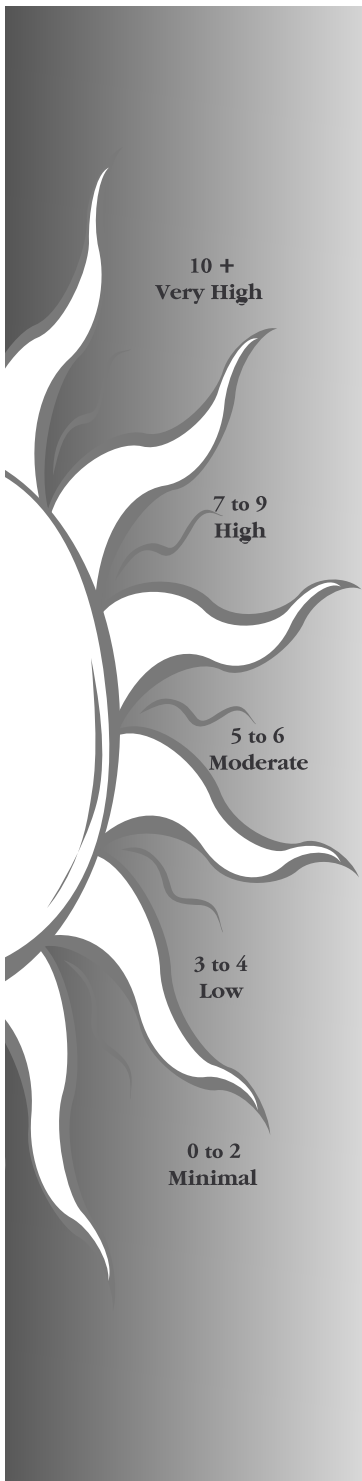
### Always Use Sunscreen

A broad spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks most UV radiation. Apply sunscreen liberally on exposed skin and reapply every 2 hours when working or playing outdoors. Even waterproof sunscreen can come off when you towel off sweat or water.



### Wear a Hat

A hat with a wide brim offers good sun protection for your eyes, ears, face, and the back of your neck—areas particularly prone to overexposure to the sun.



The UV Index provides numeric values and describes a person's likelihood of exposure to the sun's harmful rays.



### Cover Up

Wearing tightly woven, loose-fitting, and full-length clothing is a good way to protect your skin from the sun's UV rays.



### Wear Sunglasses That Block 99 to 100 Percent of UV Radiation

Sunglasses that provide 99 to 100 percent UVA and UVB protection will greatly reduce sun exposure that can lead to cataracts and other eye damage. Check the label when buying sunglasses.



### Avoid Sunlamps and Tanning Salons

The light source from sunbeds and sunlamps damages the skin and unprotected eyes. It's a good idea to avoid artificial sources of UV light.



### Watch for the UV Index

The UV Index provides important information to help you plan your outdoor activities in ways that prevent overexposure to the sun. Developed by the National Weather Service (NWS) and EPA, the UV Index is issued daily in selected cities across the United States.

## Special Considerations for Children

Although many of the sun's effects do not appear until later in life, recent medical research shows that it is very important to protect children and young adults from overexposure to UV radiation. Because children tend to spend more time in the sun than adults, be careful to keep young children protected from overexposure, and consult your physician about sun protection for children under 6 months of age.

## EPA's SunWise School Program

In response to the serious public health threat posed by overexposure to UV radiation, EPA is working with schools and communities across the nation through the SunWise School Program. SunWise teaches children in elementary school and their caregivers how to protect themselves from overexposure to the sun.



## For More Information

To learn more about UV radiation, the action steps for sun protection, and the SunWise School Program, call EPA's Stratospheric Ozone Information Hotline at 800 296-1996, or visit our Web site at <[www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise)>.