

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Sun Safety



**Healthy
Workplaces**

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by





Module- Educate Resources

sun & UV
awareness

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Ideas and Suggestions for Promoting Sun and UV Protection at Work

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- **Post information about sun and ultraviolet (UV) awareness on bulletin boards.** Download information and handouts from the Educate section of the Sun and UV Awareness page on the [Healthy Workplace](#) website.
- **Include information on the importance of safe-sun practices in short articles** for internal newsletters, staff emails, or pay cheque inserts.
- **Provide links to the Canadian Cancer Society's [Sun-Savvy Quiz](#)** for employees to test their knowledge.
- **Organize "Lunch and Learn" sessions.** Have an outdoor healthy lunch with a dermatologist or other expert to talk about skin health and sun damage. Provide shade and sunscreen.
- **Download the [Sun Safety at Work](#) free materials**, including posters, policy checklist and legal requirements.
- **Download Environment Canada's [UV Index Poster](#)** or order a free copy by emailing the National Inquiry Centre at enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca (ask for stock # MSC-19). You can also call 1-800-668-6767.





The Benefits of Avoiding Overexposure to Sun and UV Radiation

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Harms of Overexposure

Natural sunlight is important for good health, but too much exposure can cause skin cancer and eye problems.

Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or artificial light (think tanning beds) is the main cause of skin cancer. Even in northern countries like Canada, the sunlight is still strong enough to cause skin cancer, and premature aging of the skin. The risk of skin cancer is much greater today than it was 20 years ago. As the protective layer of ozone around the earth becomes thinner due to pollution and the use of chemicals, we're exposed to more and more UV rays every day.

Too much UV radiation can damage your skin cells, which can put you at greater risk for skin cancer. A tan or sunburn is a visible sign of that damage. But there's an easy way to prevent premature aging, skin cancer, and other health problems – enjoy the sun safely and avoid tanning beds.

Risks

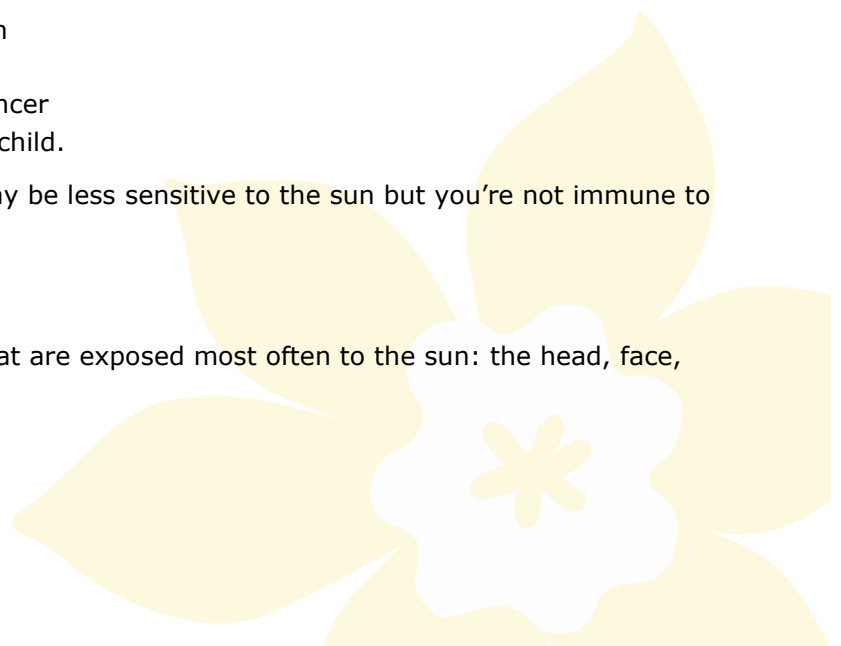
You are at greater risk of developing skin cancer if you:

- use indoor tanning equipment
- work outside
- have fair skin that tends to burn
- have a lot of moles or freckles
- have a family history of skin cancer
- have sunburns when you are a child.

If you have naturally dark skin, you may be less sensitive to the sun but you're not immune to its harmful effects.

About Skin Cancer

Many skin cancers start in the areas that are exposed most often to the sun: the head, face, neck, hands, arms, and legs.





There are two types of skin cancer: **melanoma and non-melanoma**.

- Non-melanoma skin cancer (squamous cell cancer and basal cell cancer) is the most common type of skin cancer. It can usually be treated successfully.
- Melanoma is the most dangerous type of skin cancer as it can spread to almost any organ and may result in death.

The 2019 estimates for skin cancer cases are:

Melanoma = 7,800 Canadians will be diagnosed, 1,300 will die from Melanoma

Non-melanoma = Non-melanoma skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Canadians. But specific cancer statistics for non-melanoma skin cancer are not reported.

For more information on skin cancers, go to the [Canadian Cancer Society](https://www.ccsociety.ca) website.





Sun and UV Protection for Outdoor Workers

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Working outdoors puts you at a higher risk of developing skin cancer because you are regularly exposed to the sun for long periods of time. Adding to the danger is the fact that outdoor workers are often in the sun when its ultraviolet (UV) radiation is at its strongest, between 11 am and 3 pm or when the UV Index is 3 or more, generally between April and September. Before going outside, check the weather forecast for the daily UV Index. On days when the UV Index reaches 3 (moderate) or more, you need to be extra careful to protect your skin.

Who is at Risk?

Anyone who works in agriculture or horticulture, maintenance workers, anyone working on the water, lifeguards, athletes, military and police personnel, construction workers, postal workers, and those working in logging and mining are all at a higher risk of developing skin cancer. These industries all involve a significant amount of time outdoors.

There are some things that you can do to reduce your risk:

- Before going outside, check the weather forecast for the daily UV index.
- Try to limit the amount of time you work outdoors in the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Seek shade — from buildings, trees, canopies, etc. — as much as possible, especially during lunch and coffee breaks.
- Wear clothing that covers as much of your body as possible. Fabrics that are made from a tightly woven fabric and UV protected labelled work best. Clothing provides better protection than sunscreen.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or brimmed hard hat that covers your head, face, ears and neck. Attach a back flap to a construction helmet to cover the back of your neck and attach a visor for your face. Hats like baseball caps won't give you enough protection. Put sunscreen on your ears, chin and neck even when you're wearing a hat.
- Sunglasses or safety glasses can help prevent damage to your eyes by blocking a large percentage of UV rays. Sunglasses don't have to be expensive to be effective, but make sure you choose close-fitting ones with UVA and UVB protection in a wrap-around style. The label might have UV 400 or 100% UV protection on it.



- Apply a broad spectrum (UVA and UVB protection) sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all the exposed areas of your skin 20 minutes before you go outside. If you forget to put it on before going outside, it's not too late! Put it on as soon as you can. You should also wear a lip balm containing SPF.
- Reapply your sunscreen and lip balm as directed, or even more often if you are perspiring heavily or if you are in the water.
- Know the signs of skin cancer and check your skin regularly. Most skin cancers can be cured if they're caught early enough. (See "[Skin Exam](#)" for more information)

Sources:

Canadian Dermatology Association, [Outdoor Workers](#)

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, [Skin Cancer and Sunlight](#)

Canadian Cancer Society, [Be Sun Safe](#)

