

Sun Safety



Family

Introduction

Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Research has indicated that young children and babies have sensitive skin that places them at particular risk of sunburn and skin damage.

Exposure during the first 15 years of life can greatly increase the risk of developing skin cancer in later life. Early childhood services play a major role in minimising a child's UV exposure as children attend during times when UV radiation levels are highest.

Sources

- ❖ National Health and Medical Research Council – www.nhmrc.gov.au
- ❖ NSW Department of Health – www.health.nsw.gov.au
- ❖ Cancer Council NSW



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We are a *SunSmart* service.

When does my child need protection from the sun?

All areas in NSW experience high levels of UV radiation most of the year – even on cloudy or cooler days. Check the SunSmart UV Alert daily on www.cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart or in the weather section of newspapers. Whenever it is **3 or above**, use our top SunSmart tips. **Please Note:** AT FIT KIDZ, HATS WILL BE WORN AT ALL TIMES OF THE YEAR BY CHILDREN AND STAFF WHEN OUTSIDE.

Top *SunSmart* Tips

1. Choose sun-safe clothing, such as longer-style shorts and skirts, and T-shirts and dresses with sleeves, collars or covered necklines.
2. Choose a wide-brimmed, bucket-style or legionnaire hat that protects the face, neck and ears. Keep spare hats in your car or bag.



3. Encourage play in the shade, but keep hats, clothing and sunscreen on.
4. Apply SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen to any exposed skin. Reapply every two hours, or more often if wiped or washed off.

Take special care of babies:

- When outside, keep babies well shaded at all times.
- Use covers for prams and strollers.
- Sunscreen may be safely applied to any small areas of skin not protected by hats and clothing.

How much sun do you need for vitamin D?

Production of vitamin D is influenced by a number of factors including:

- UV levels in the atmosphere;
- your age;
- your skin colour; and
- the amount of skin you have exposed to the sun.

UV levels vary depending on time of day, time of year and where you are in NSW making it difficult to provide advice about the amount of sun exposure required to make adequate vitamin D to the population as a whole.

In NSW, people with moderately fair skin should get enough vitamin D by exposing about 15% of the body (hands and arms or lower legs) to sunlight for the recommended time periods on most days of the week. The recommended time periods below have been developed as a guide only to assist people living in NSW maintain adequate vitamin D levels, while minimising the risk of skin cancer.

October to March**

- 10 minutes in mid-morning or mid-afternoon.
- April, May, August and September**
- 15 minutes in mid-morning or mid-afternoon.

June and July**

- Southern NSW (eg Sydney, Batemans Bay, Wagga Wagga): 30-40 minutes in the middle of the day.
- Northern and far western NSW (eg Cape Byron, Armidale, Cobar): 20-25 minutes in mid-morning or mid-afternoon.

*** Care must be taken by people with very fair skin and/or at high risk of skin cancer. Always check UV levels in your local area at cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart or download the free SunSmart app. When UV levels are 3 and above, use sun protection.*

Is sunscreen harmful to my child's health?

There is no evidence that using sunscreen is harmful for children – but remember:

- Sunscreen does not provide complete protection and should always be used with clothing, hats and shade.
- Allergic reactions can occasionally occur. Look for sunscreen made for children or for sensitive skin.
- There is currently no evidence that nanoparticles are harmful to health – however Cancer Council sunscreens do not contain nanoparticles.

Is my child safe from sunburn in the car?

You can get burnt through a car window. Untinted glass commonly used in car side windows reduces, but does not completely block, transmission of UV radiation. This means you can still get burnt if you spend a long time in the car next to an untinted side window when the UV is high. More commonly, people are burnt in cars with the windows down, where they can be exposed to high levels of UV radiation.

