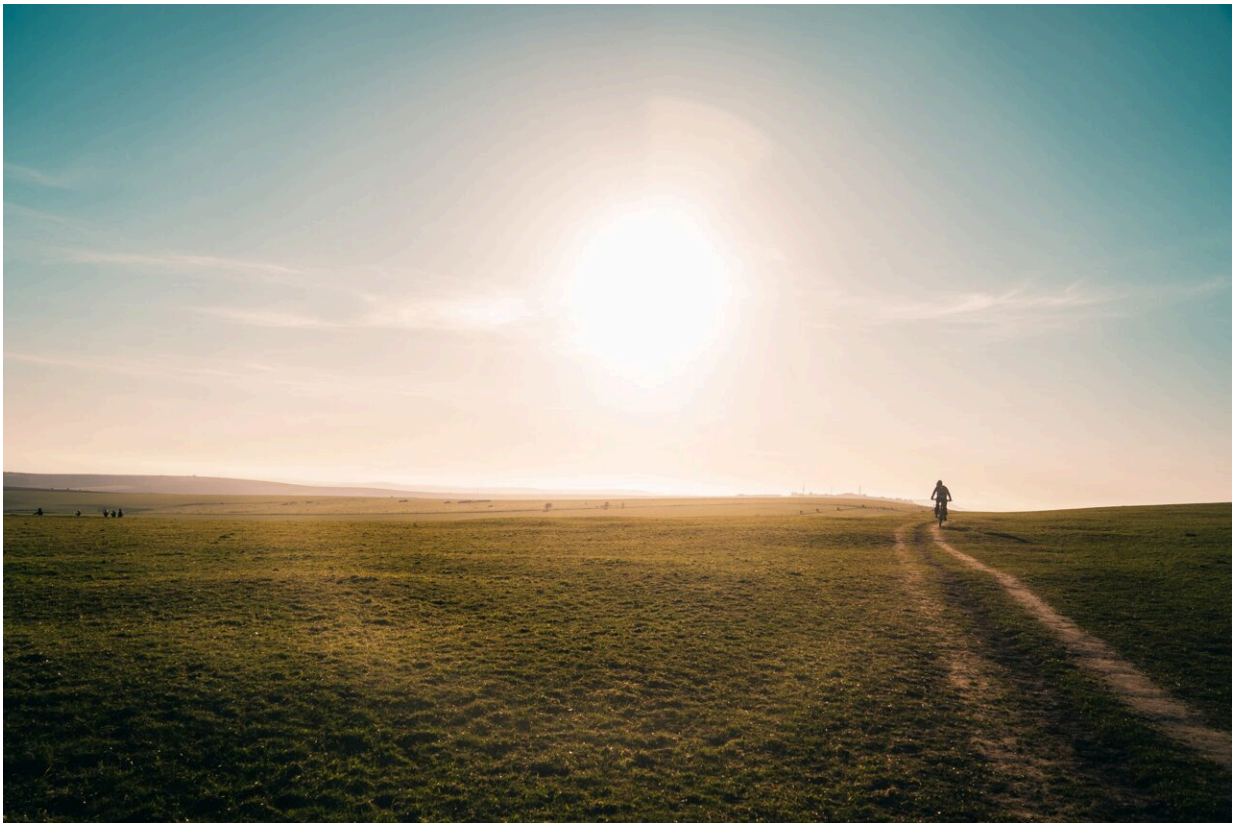


Consumer health: Enjoy the summer sun safely

August 10 2022, by Laurel Kelly



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

August is Summer Sun Safety Month, which makes this a good time to learn more about protecting yourself and your family from the harmful effects of ultraviolet, or UV, radiation from sunlight.

Exercising and enjoying time outdoors are important for good health. Staying protected from the sun will allow you and your family to do so safely.

Exposure to UV radiation from the sun damages your skin, and increases your risk of developing skin cancer, wrinkles and age spots. Children are especially vulnerable because they tend to spend more time outdoors and can burn easily.

Skin cancer, which develops primarily on areas of sun-exposed skin, including the scalp, face, lips, ears, neck, chest, arms, hands and legs, is the most common type of cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. This slideshow includes images of several conditions caused by [sun damage](#)—some of which can progress to [skin cancer](#).

Here are four ways you can protect yourself and your family from UV radiation damage:

- Time of day: Avoid sun exposure in the middle of the day—between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.—when the UV rays are strongest. In addition, be mindful that clouds offer little protection, and UV rays can bounce off surfaces like water, sand, snow or pavement, leading to increased UV exposure.
- Sunscreen: Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a [sun protection factor](#), or SPF, of at least 30, even on cloudy days. Apply sunscreen generously, and reapply every two hours—or more often if you're swimming or perspiring. Use a generous amount of sunscreen on all exposed skin, including your lips, the tips of your ears, and the backs of your hands and neck. And if you're using leftover [sunscreen](#) from year to year, be sure to check the expiration date.
- Sunglasses: UV radiation also can burn your eyes. And because children's eyes are still maturing, they are especially vulnerable to

the harmful effects of UV radiation. Sunburned eyes can feel painful or gritty. Too much UV light can damage the retina, lens and cornea. Sun damage to the lens can lead to clouding of the lens, or cataracts. Exposure to UV light also can increase the risk of developing ocular melanoma. Look for sunglasses that block both types of UV radiation—UVA and UVB rays.

- **Protective clothing:** Sunscreens don't provide complete protection from UV rays. You also should protect your skin with dark, tightly woven clothing that covers your arms and legs, and a broad-brimmed hat that provides more protection than a baseball cap or visor. Some companies also sell photoprotective clothing, with a UV protection factor, or UPF, rating similar to the SPF rating of sunscreens.

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