



*Sedgwick County...
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Sun Exposure

When do I need to protect myself from sun exposure?

Protection from sun exposure is important year-round, not just during the summer or at the beach. As long as the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are reaching the earth, you need to protect yourself from excessive sun exposure. UV rays can cause skin damage during any season or temperature.

What time of day is the most hazardous for UV exposure?

Relatively speaking, the hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. during daylight saving time and between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. during standard time are the most hazardous for UV exposure in the continental U.S. UV radiation is the greatest during the late spring and early summer.

Remember: UV rays reach you on cloudy and hazy days, as well as on bright and sunny days. UV rays will also reflect off any surface including water, cement, sand and snow.

What exactly are "ultraviolet rays"

Ultraviolet (UV) rays are invisible forms of radiation from sunlight. UV rays can penetrate and change the structure of skin cells.

There are three types of UV rays: ultraviolet A (UVA), ultraviolet B (UVB), and ultraviolet C (UVC). UVA is the most common source of solar radiation at the earth's surface and pierces past the top layer of human skin. Scientists believe UVA radiation can increase a person's chance for developing skin cancer.

The Sedgwick County Health Department Offers Tips to be SunWise:

- **Limit Time in the Midday Sun** The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Seek Shade** Remember the shadow rule: "Watch Your Shadow – No Shadow, Seek Shade!"
- **Always Use Sunscreen** Choose a sunscreen with at least an SPF of 15.
- **Wear a Hat**
- **Cover Up** Wear loose-fitting and full length clothing to protect your skin.
- **Wear Sunglasses that Block 99 to 100% of UV Radiation**
- **Avoid Tanning Salons**
- **Watch for the UV Index** Remember: 0 is minimal; 10 is very high!

How can I protect myself from the sun's UV rays?

When possible, avoid outdoor activities during midday. You can also wear protective clothing, such as a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants.

For eye protection, wear wraparound sunglasses that provide 100 percent UV ray protection. Always wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen and lipscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15. SPF is a number given to sunscreens and lipscreens that rate their effectiveness in protecting individuals from UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. Remember to reapply as indicated by the manufacturer's directions.



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Health Department

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Can extreme temperatures shorten sunscreen's expiration date?

Yes, check your sunscreen's expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years. Exposure to extreme temperatures can shorten the expiration date or shelf life of sunscreen.

What can excessive exposure to UV rays do to my health?

UV exposure appears to be the most important environmental factor in the development of skin cancer and a primary factor in the development of lip cancer.

Although some sun exposure can yield a few positive benefits, excessive and unprotected exposure to the sun can result in premature aging and undesirable changes in skin texture. Such exposure has been associated with various types of skin cancer, including melanoma, one of the most serious and deadly forms. UV rays also have been found to be associated with various eye conditions, such as cataracts.

What kind of sunscreen should I use?

Sunscreen comes in a variety of forms such as lotions, gels, and sprays, so there are plenty of different options. There are also sunscreens made for specific purposes, such as the scalp, sensitive skin, and for use on babies. Regardless of the type of sunscreen you choose, be sure you use one that blocks both UVA and UVB rays and that it offers at least SPF 15.

Courtesy: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Cancer Prevention and Control, www.cdc.gov/ChooseYourCover/qanda.htm#index1
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

For More Information:

Contact the Sedgwick County Health Department at 316-660-7300 or visit the Sedgwick County website at www.sedgwickcounty.org.