

# SUN SAFETY TIPS!

Children have delicate skin and this places them at a greater risk of sunburn and skin damage. In fact, unprotected sun exposure during the first 15 years of life has significant impact on the likelihood of developing skin cancer later in life. The good news is that most skin cancers can be prevented by protecting your skin from the sun's UV rays. UV is dangerous because you can't SEE it or FEEL it. Here are some facts about the dangers of UV radiation and how to protect yourself.....

## UV or not UV

UV, or Ultraviolet radiation, can cause skin damage and skin cancer. The sun is the major source of UV radiation. You can SEE and FEEL sunlight but you can't see or feel UV radiation - that's why it's so dangerous. Many people think if the sun is not out, they can't get sunburnt. Not true. UV radiation can be high even on overcast days. The level of UV varies at different times of the day and is highest, and most dangerous, during the middle of the day. It is important to remember that UV also reflects off different surfaces including cement, glass, snow, water & sand so even if you're under shade, you need to protect your skin. The more exposure you have to UV radiation and the more sunburns you experience (especially when you are young) the higher the risk of getting skin cancer as UV

penetrates the skin and causes permanent damage to your skin's cells.

## Sunbeds & Solaria

Studies have revealed the UV radiation emitted from sunbeds, solaria and sun lamps can be stronger than the midday sun. Using a sunbed will increase your risk of melanoma and other skin cancers. Commercial sunbeds were banned in Australia in 2015/2016 because of their obvious health risks.



## Our region



In the 1980's the Hunter Region had one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. In Australia, 2 in 3 people will develop some form of skin cancer and more than 1300 people will die from melanoma each year. Melanoma is not a disease

that only affects old people - young people get melanoma too - in fact, it is the most common cancer in the 15-39 age group. But the good news is that skin cancer is almost totally preventable (see "5 ways to protect yourself") and most skin cancers can be cured if found and treated early.

## Vitamin D



Our bodies require small amounts of UV to produce Vitamin D, important for bone development & maintenance. UV levels in NSW are high, so most people get enough Vitamin D through normal daily activity - even with sun protection.

## UV Alert



A UV alert is issued when the UV index (reading) is 3 or more - a level that can damage unprotected skin. The higher the UV index, the

quicker the skin damage will occur. The UV alert is often part of the daily weather forecast.

## SunSmart UV Index

The SunSmart app is a tool you can use to protect yourself from UV radiation. It tells you the time during the day that you need to be sun smart. The daily UV rating also appears on weather apps, and often in newspapers and radio weather reports. A UV monitor purchased by HMF is located on the rooftop of the Hunter Regional Hospital in Newcastle & provides accurate UV radiation level readings. You can view the readings at [www.arpana.gov.au](http://www.arpana.gov.au)



**HMF**  
Hunter Melanoma Foundation

## 5 ways to protect yourself



**slip**

on a shirt



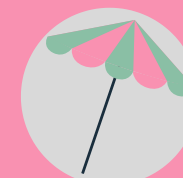
**slop**

on 50+ sunscreen



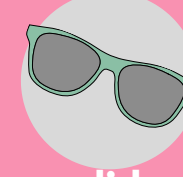
**slap**

on a hat



**seek**

shade



**slide**

on sunglasses