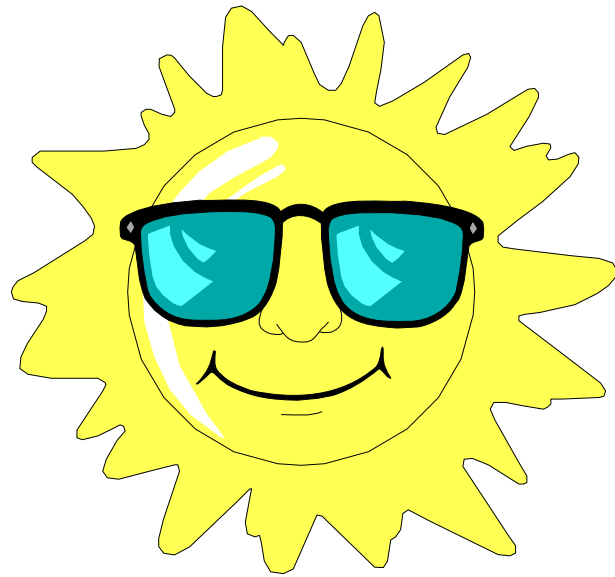


# Sun Safety

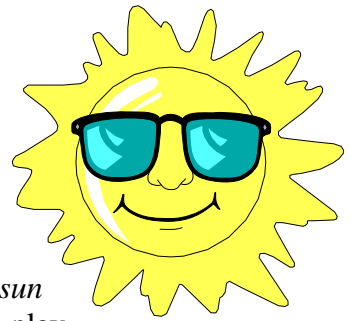


## Information Guide for Schools

Revised February 2008

Material developed by Toronto Public Health, Scarborough Office  
Sun Safety symbols adapted from the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria (Australia)

# Sun Safety for Schools



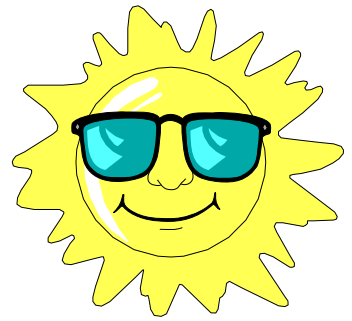
This *Information Guide* contains facts and tips to assist you in bringing “*sun safety as a lifestyle choice*” alive in your school. Children and adolescents in play and in sports activities at school are often exposed to too much ultraviolet radiation (UV) from sunlight during outdoor activities. It is important that students be active and get fresh air, but the health concern of over-exposure to UV needs to be addressed.

The health risks associated with over-exposure to UV are largely preventable. With some simple steps, eyes and skin can be protected. You can play an important part in this. Use this guide to:

- ⚙ Educate students about these health concerns.
- ⚙ Raise awareness about standard sun safety recommendations.
- ⚙ Make sun safety an integral part of your regular outdoor school programming as well as special outdoor events or outings.
- ⚙ Develop and implement a sun safety policy.

By making sunburn prevention and eye protection an important goal, you will be giving the children the best gift of all – health for tomorrow.

# Sunlight and Your Health



## Background Information

There continues to be gradual thinning of the ozone layer over southern Ontario. Because of this, adults and children are being exposed to a more intense penetration of ultraviolet radiation (UV) in sunlight. This increase is expected to continue at least until the year 2050 (Environment Canada, 1996).

- ☼ Infants and children are at a high risk for over-exposure to sunlight.
- ☼ Children receive up to 80% of their total UV life dose before the age of 18 (Health Canada).
- ☼ Infants and children have thinner skin than adults and are more sensitive to UV rays (Health Canada).
- ☼ All skin colours are at risk for skin damage from UV rays. Those at greatest risk for skin damage are fair-skinned children, especially those who freckle or who burn easily, never tan, or tan poorly.

Health risks associated with excessive sunlight UV exposure include sunburns, aging of skin, eye damage, and skin cancers.

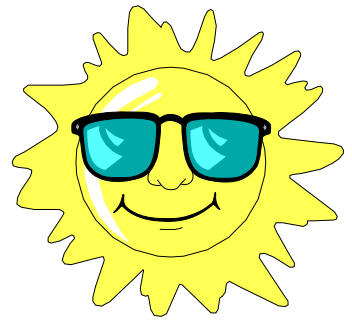
- ☼ One blistering sunburn during childhood may double the chance for a child to develop skin cancer later in life. This is because the damage to the skin cells does not go away, it adds up with each sunburn over the years.
- ☼ One in seven children born today will develop skin cancer in their lifetime (Canadian Dermatology Association).

The health risks associated with excessive sunlight (UV) are largely **preventable!**

## Did you know that...

- ☼ Up to 80% of ultraviolet radiation passes through puffy, fair-weather clouds, haze, fog, and layers of thin, light cloud. The sun safety recommendations apply on cloudy and hazy days too.
- ☼ Furthermore, a child can receive an additional 10 – 80% more UV if that child is on or near a surface such as sand, cement, water, or snow that reflects the sun's rays.

# Sunlight and Your Health



When you feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, UVA and UVB rays are passing through the surface into the skin cells below. On a windy or overcast day, even if you don't feel the warmth, this is still happening.

Reddening of skin is a sign that there has been too much sun exposure. Each time you sunburn there is damage to the skin cells. The surface of your skin may heal but the damage in the skin cells below the surface does not go away. It is retained in skin cells and accumulates over the years. Your skin becomes weakened by this damage, putting you at greater risk of developing skin cancer.

The sun's rays can also damage cells in the structures of your eyes. This may increase the risk for cataracts later in life. This damage can be prevented by protecting your eyes with sunglasses and/or a hat with a wide brim.

This skin damage can be prevented by avoiding sunburns to your skin and reducing overall UV exposure. Follow the sun safety guidelines below.

***Note: Indoor tanning is no safer than the sun.***

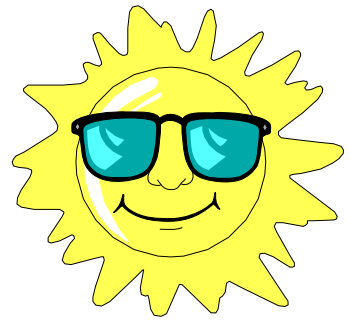
## **To Be Sun Safe...**

- ⊗ Limit your time in the sun during the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and seek shade whenever possible.
- ⊗ Cover up with a wide brimmed hat, clothing and sunglasses.
- ⊗ Use UVA/UVB sunscreen SPF 15 or higher on all exposed skin.

**Enjoy the Outdoors!**

**Just Remember To Be Sun Safe!**

# Standard Sun Safety Recommendations



The following standard sun safety recommendations are endorsed by Health Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Dermatology Association, Environment Canada and other key organizations.

It is important that staff provide a positive “sun-safe” role model for the children. Staff and children should follow these recommendations when outside.

## **Limit the time you spend in the sun during the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.**

- ☉ Plan daily outdoor activity so that the children are not playing in direct sunlight during the most intense ultraviolet radiation between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- ☉ Keep babies under one year of age out of direct sunlight as much as possible.

## **Look for shaded areas to do outdoor activities (trees, umbrellas, and awnings).**

- ☉ Do outdoor activities in shady spots (e.g. under a tree or in the shade of a building).
- ☉ Create shade by planting trees or by using partial roofs, awnings, umbrellas, gazebo tents, etc.

## **Wear clothing to protect as much of your skin as possible.**

- ☉ Advise parents that loose fitting long-sleeved shirts and long pants (or at least knee-length shorts) are recommended even on overcast days.
- ☉ Tightly woven fabrics block the sun’s rays the best. A fabric that blocks out the light when held up to the sun or a light bulb will act as a shield against ultraviolet light. Sunscreen should be applied under sheer clothing.

## **Wear a hat**

- ☉ A hat with a wide brim, or a ball cap with a back flap, will help shade eyes, ears and neck areas. Hats made of tightly woven fabric are best.

## **Put on UV protective sunglasses**

- ☉ Adults and children should wear sunglasses that have 100% UVA/UVB protection.
- ☉ Wide brimmed hats are effective in blocking direct ultraviolet radiation from eyes and are a good choice for young children.

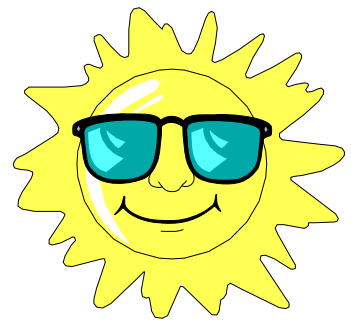
## **Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that gives protection from both UVA and UVB rays.**

- ☉ All staff and children should apply sunscreen before going outdoors to do any activities.

**Exception:** Sunscreen is not recommended by the Canadian Dermatology Association for infants under 6 months of age.

- ☉ Remember that SPF 15 is the minimum protection. If children are going to be outside for longer than two and a half hours an SPF of 30 might be a better choice. No sunscreen offers complete protection but the higher the SPF, the more protection given.
- ☉ Babies under 12 months old should be covered with clothing and kept out of direct sunlight in a covered stroller, under an umbrella or gazebo tent or in the shade as much as possible.
- ☉ If any child develops an allergic reaction such as redness, itching, blotching or rashes after sunscreen has been applied, stop using the product immediately. Inform the child’s parent of the reaction and suggest that he/she consult with a pharmacist or doctor.
- ☉ Use a minimum SPF 15 lip balm. Don’t forget to reapply every hour.

# Getting the most from SUNSCREEN!



Read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations on the bottle or tube. Sunscreen should not be used after its expiry date.

Test for allergic reaction when first using a sunscreen. Check with the child's parent for any history of skin reactions to the sunscreen product. If this information is not available, suggest that a parent do the following test. Apply a liberal amount of the sunscreen on the child's inner forearm for 2-3 days consecutively (e.g. over a weekend). Instruct the parent to check to see if there are any signs of an adverse reaction (e.g. redness, itching, etc.). Consult with a pharmacist or doctor if a reaction occurs.

**Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going out.**

- ⚙ This is *important!* It allows time for the active ingredients in the sunscreen to reach the protection level.

**Apply sunscreen generously to dry clean skin.**

- ⚙ Apply a generous amount of sunscreen to dry clean skin. Don't forget ears, nose, back of neck, backs of legs and tops of feet!

**Reapply every 2 hours and after perspiring.**

- ⚙ Sunscreen (including waterproof varieties) should be re-applied every 2 hours and after skin becomes wet from water or perspiration to maintain maximum effectiveness.

*Note: Repeated applications of a sunscreen simply reinforce the sun protection. Reapplication does not increase the amount of time you can spend in the sun beyond the maximum SPF of the sunscreen.*

**If applying more than one substance (e.g. insect repellent\*) on the skin,**

- ⚙ always put the sunscreen product on first and wait the 30 minutes after applying. Then apply the second substance.

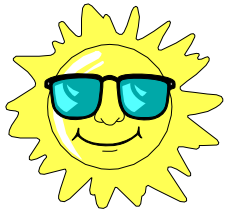
*Note: Application of insect repellent may reduce the effectiveness of the sunscreen.*

*\*Caution should be exercised when using insect repellents on children. Do not use insect repellent DEET on children under 6 months of age.*

## **REMEMBER:**

**Sunscreen does not provide 100% protection. When outside, shade, clothing and hats should be the first choice. Then use sunscreen on all remaining exposed skin.**





## A COMPREHENSIVE SUN SAFETY PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS

EDUCATION	GUIDELINE	SUPPORT
<p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>For Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ Include Fun in the Sun quiz in your school newsletter and encourage parents to go to the Health Unit website for more information</li> <li>⊗ Use materials on Health Unit website as resources for parents</li> </ul> <p><b>For Teachers</b></p> <p>Distribute a copy of “Sun Safety Information Guide for Schools” to each teacher at your school and ensure all staff are aware of the sun safety recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ Incorporate sun safety recommendations when planning and implementing outdoor activities and events at your school.</li> <li>⊗ Brainstorm fun ways to encourage the students and staff to participate in sun safe behaviours.</li> </ul> <p><b>For Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ There is a complete lesson plan for grade 6 students at <a href="http://www.toronto.ca/health/sun_grade6.pdf">http://www.toronto.ca/health/sun_grade6.pdf</a></li> <li>⊗ Teach the students how to apply sunscreen.</li> <li>⊗ Teach the students the importance of sun safe measures (see Standard Sun Safety Recommendations).</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <p><b>A Written Sun Safety Guideline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ Establishes standards for sun safety in children’s outdoor play areas (e.g. shade trees)</li> <li>⊗ Establishes guidelines on sun safety:</li> </ul> <p><b>For Staff</b> - when work assignment is partly or totally outdoors in a supervisory, teaching or property-care capacity.</p> <p><b>For Children</b> - during:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ outdoor play times</li> <li>⊗ classes held outdoors</li> <li>⊗ outdoor events</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ Send the “Dear Parent/Guardian letter” home with consent form when the students are going on an outing outdoors.</li> <li>⊗ Schedule outdoor events before 11:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m., if possible.</li> <li>⊗ Assess school play areas for shade. Provide shade in play areas (e.g. participate in tree planting programs).</li> <li>⊗ Plan sun safety activities during “National Sun Awareness Week” to raise awareness e.g. “Sun Safe Hat Day”.</li> <li>⊗ Encourage students to bring a wide brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt and sunscreen to school from the beginning of April to the end of September and use whenever going outside.</li> <li>⊗ Schedule time 30 minutes before going outdoors to have students apply sunscreen.</li> <li>⊗ Encourage all staff to be “sun safe” role models.</li> <li>⊗ Promote your school as a “sun safe” facility all year round.</li> <li>⊗ Encourage all outdoor sports and track teams to follow sun safety guidelines.</li> <li>⊗ When purchasing uniforms for school teams doing activities outdoors, ensure clothing and hats provide protection in accordance to sun safety guidelines.</li> </ul>

# DRAFT Sun Safety Guidelines

## FOR SCHOOLS

### **Guideline:**

Staff at (name of school) will implement the following Sun Safety Guideline to protect themselves and the children at the facility from the harmful rays of the sun.

### **Rationale:**

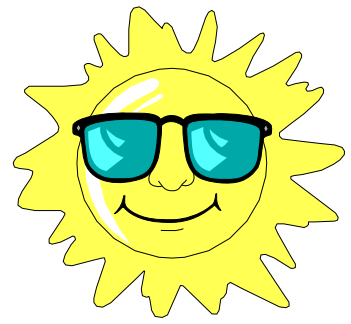
One in seven children will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. One severe sunburn during childhood doubles the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. (Canadian Dermatology Association).

### **Procedure:**

1. Staff will review the Sun Safety Information Guide for Schools and will role model sun safe behaviours.
2. Outdoor activities will be held before 11 a.m. and after 4 p.m., especially from the beginning of April until the end of September, whenever possible.
3. Outdoor activities will occur in areas shaded by trees, umbrellas, awnings or buildings, whenever possible.
4. Staff / students will look for opportunities to partner with the community to create shade by planting trees or using umbrellas or tents.
5. Parents/guardians of children attending our school will be given information on how to protect themselves, and their children, from harmful ultra violet rays. (See information for parents in "Sun Safety Information Guide for Schools").
6. Parents will be asked to provide the following items for their children attending the school:
  - a) A wide brimmed hat or a ball cap with a back flap to cover the neck.
  - b) Comfortable, loose fitting, long sleeved shirt and long pants (or at least knee length shorts) made from fabrics that are tightly woven.
  - c) Sunglasses with 100% UVA / UVB protection.
  - d) Sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher that offers UVA and UVB protection that has already been tested on the child's skin for adverse reactions.
  - e) Items c) and d) will be requested for winter use.
7. Staff will encourage children to use the above items in a consistent and proper manner. Sunscreen should be applied at least 30 minutes before going outside and hats and sunglasses should be worn during outside activities.
8. Sun safe behaviours will be practiced all year round.



# Sun Safety Activities



## For Schools

**Make a sundial** – just use a paper and pencil to mark the place of the sun’s shadow each hour.

**Sunburn a newspaper for demonstration** – get 3 sheets of newspaper. Cover part of each with black construction paper. Place one in the sun, one in the shade and one on the asphalt in the sun in the schoolyard for 1 hour. Compare what the paper looks like!

**Have a school-wide hat and sunglasses day** – make every student aware of the dangers of too much sun. Make it a fun day.

**Measure the shadows of the children** – see how they change as the day goes by. Explain why staying out of the sun is recommended when shadows are short.

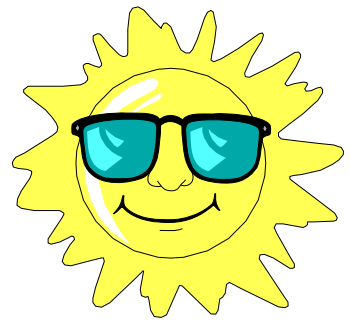
**Graph the UV ratings** – have students look up the UV rating from the newspaper or TV each day and compare the sunshine you see with the numbers given.

**Create your own sun safety slogan** – use the creative ideas of the students to create a sun safety poster or message for the school halls or daily announcements.

**Measure the temperature** – measure temperature (1) inside the school (2) outside under a tree (3) outside in direct sunlight (4) outside standing on the asphalt in the schoolyard. Where was it coolest? Hottest?

**Set a good example** – when you are on yard duty cover up and wear a hat and sunglasses. Show the children that you respect the power of the sun and encourage them to follow your example.

# Resources on Sun Safety



## **Canadian Cancer Society** (contact your local chapter)

Visit [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) (No cost for these materials).

- a) Rayguard's, "Be Sun Smart" Activity Book (ages 8 to 11 years)
- b) Rayguard's, Bookmark (ages 6 to 11 years)
- c) Sunsense Poster
- d) Sunsense Pamphlet and bookmark (Youth, Teens, Adult)

## **Canadian Dermatology Association** 1-800-267-3376

Visit [www.dermatology.ca](http://www.dermatology.ca) For educational tools and ordering information, visit <http://www.dermatology.ca/sap/index.html> (There may be fees for these materials).

- a) Sun Safe Play, Everyday – mini poster with check list for children to use prior to going outside
- b) Be Sun Safe – stickers (4 to 7 years)
- c) Be Sun Safe – colouring page (4 to 7 years)

## **Environment Canada**

Visit [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/securit/sports/sun-sol/uv-prog/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/securit/sports/sun-sol/uv-prog/index_e.html) Children's UV Index Sun Awareness Program (school aged children).

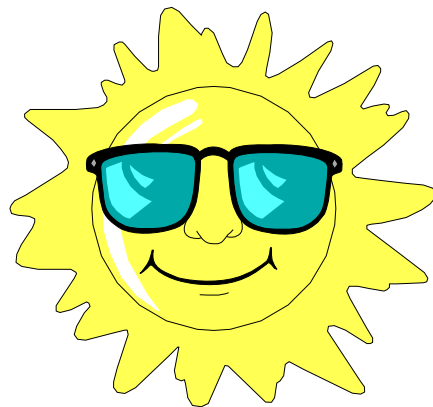
## **Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit**

Other Sun Safety resources are available at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)  
For more details, call Health Connection.



Tel: 721-7520  
Toll free: 1-877-721-7520  
[www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)  
*Your Health Connection*

# Handouts



Dear Parent/Guardian:

To protect your child from too much sun on the day of the activity, we are recommending that you follow these sun safety guidelines.

Dress your child in:

- ⚙ comfortable, loose, **long-sleeved shirt** and **long pants** (or at least knee-length shorts) made from fabrics that are tightly woven.
- ⚙ a **wide brimmed hat or a ball cap with a back flap**. Ensure the hat protects the ears, neck, and face. The hat should also be made of a tightly woven fabric.

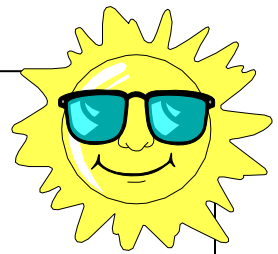
Send your child with:

- ⚙ **sunscreen** with minimum SPF 15 or higher that gives protection from both UVA & UVB rays. (If your child is going to be outside for longer than two and a half hours SPF 30 would be a better choice.)
- ⚙ **sunglasses** with 100% UVA / UVB sun protection.
- ⚙ **lip balm** with SPF 15. Apply hourly while outdoors.

Too much sunshine during childhood can cause eye damage, premature skin aging and skin cancer later in life. All skin colours are at risk!

Help your child have a "sun safe" outing.

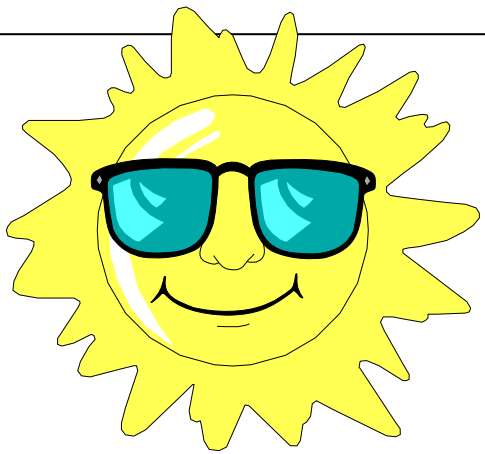
# Have fun in the sun, but be safe!



Check out your “Sun Safety” sense by answering these true and false questions...

- |   | True                     | False                    |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. You can't burn on a cloudy day.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Up to 80% of the sun's rays can pass through light cloud, mist and fog.  |                          |                          |
| 2. UV rays are their strongest between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., especially between April to October.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Schedule outdoor activities when the UV rays are weakest.  |                          |                          |
| 3. 80% of skin cancers occur above the neck.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Cover everyone's head, neck and ears with a wide brimmed hat when outdoors and wear sun glasses with 100% UVA/UVB protection.  |                          |                          |
| 4. Only fair skinned people are at risk from too much exposure to sunlight.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Too much sunlight can damage eyes leading to cataracts and can damage the skin, leading to sunburn, premature skin aging and skin cancer. Everyone, regardless of skin colour, needs protection from the sun, although fairer skinned people are at greatest risk for skin damage. |                          |                          |
| 5. A suntan is a sign of good health.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> A suntan is a sign that your skin is trying to protect itself against the sun's damaging rays. The tan will fade but the damage to your skin cells remains and adds up over the years.   |                          |                          |
| 6. Stay in the water and your skin won't burn.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> Ultraviolet radiation penetrates the water and can also reflect off bright surfaces such as sand, cement or snow.  |                          |                          |
| 7. One blistering sunburn can <i>double</i> your child's chances of developing skin cancer later in life.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Hint:</i> The damage to the skin cells does not go away, but rather accumulates over the years with each sunburn. In fact, one-in-seven children born today will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.  |                          |                          |

Answers: 1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. F 6. F 7. T



# Be Sun Safe

**If you work or play in the sun you need to protect yourself ...**



Limit the time you spend in the sun during the hours of 11 am and 4 pm.



Look for shaded areas to do outdoor activities (trees, umbrellas, awnings).



Wear a hat with a wide brim or a ball cap with a back flap. Ensure the hat protects the ears, neck, and face.



Wear loose clothing to protect as much of your skin as possible.



Put on sunglasses with 100% UVA/UVB protection.



Use a sun screen with:  
⚙ SPF 15 or higher  
⚙ UVA & UVB protection

***Note: Indoor tanning is no safer than the sun.***