

Stay Safe in the Sun

Protect yourself from Skin Cancer



The Importance of Sun Safety

Don't be one of the 1 million new cases of skin cancer diagnosed in the United States this year!

In 2004, more than 75 million Americans aged 16 and older went hiking. Hiking offers overwhelming health benefits for those who take to the trail but the dangers associated with spending too much time in the sun are very real. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) one in five Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetime, and in fact, one person will die every hour from skin cancer, primarily melanoma. American Hiking Society is working with EPA's SunWise program to reduce the incidence of skin cancer by teaching hikers how to protect themselves from overexposure to the sun.

How you can protect yourself

The risk is serious but can be greatly reduced by following a few simple guidelines.

☀ Limit time in the midday sun

Try to limit exposure during the day when the sun's rays are strongest — between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Choose hikes that provide shade at these times and save your open hikes for early in the day. Remember that UV rays bounce off sand, snow, concrete, and water increasing your risk of exposure.

☀ Wear a hat and cover up

A hat with a wide brim protects areas prone to overexposure, such as your eyes, ears, face, and the back of your neck. Whenever possible wear clothing that protects against UV rays.

☀ Wear sunglasses that block UV rays

Check the label when buying sunglasses. Sunglasses that provide 99-100% UVA and UVB protection will greatly reduce sun exposure that can lead to cataracts and other eye damage.

☀ Always use sunscreen

Apply a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher half an hour before going outdoors to achieve adequate UV protection. Use products that provide broad-spectrum protection against both UVA and UVB rays. Reapply every 2 hours or more regularly if exercising outdoors. Even waterproof sunscreen can come off when you sweat.

☀ Watch for the UV index

The UV Index was developed by the National Weather Service (NWS) and EPA to help people plan activities to prevent overexposure to UV radiation. To learn more about this daily forecast of UV intensity and to sign up to receive your local UV Index and UV Alert via email, visit www.epa.gov/sunwise.

☀ See your doctor

90% of all skin cancers are curable if detected early. Know the skin you're in. If you see a change...see a doctor.

Visit www.skincancerprevention.org & www.epa.gov/sunwise for more information.