

## Be SunSmart

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. This is largely due to our climate, our proximity to the equator and our love of the great outdoors. Fortunately, being SunSmart is a simple and effective way to reduce your risk of developing skin cancer. Cancer Council recommends a five-step approach to sun protection when the SunSmart UV Alert is 3 or above.

There's more to sun protection than sunscreen. Protect yourself in five ways:



**Slip** on sun protective clothing



**Slop** on SPF30+ sunscreen



**Slap** on a broad-brimmed hat



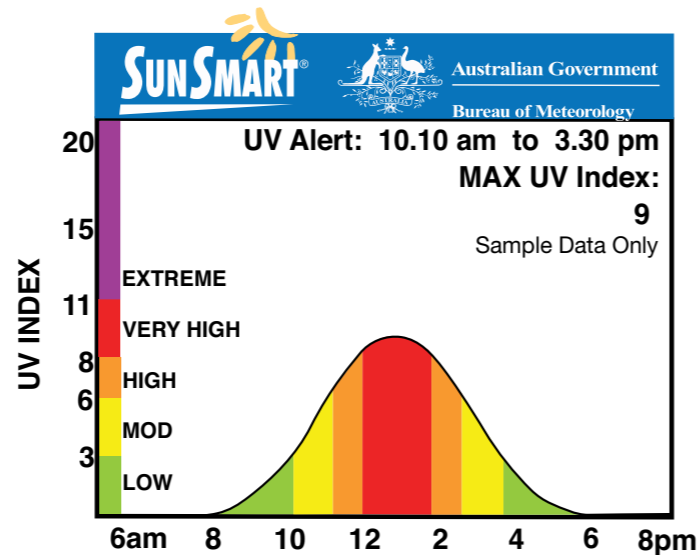
**Seek** shade



**Slide** on wrap-around sunglasses

## SunSmart UV Alert

When the UV Alert reaches 3 and above, be SunSmart and protect your skin.



Be SunSmart in Australia with the official SunSmart app available for free download from iTunes and the UV Alert Widget for websites available at [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)



Cancer Council  
**Helpline**  
**13 11 20**  
[www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)

For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues, call Cancer Council Helpline. This is a confidential service.

### National Relay Service

Deaf or hearing impaired	13 3677
Speech impairment	1300 555 727
<b>Cantonese and Mandarin</b>	1300 300 935
<b>Greek</b>	1300 301 449
<b>Italian</b>	1300 301 431
<b>Arabic</b>	1300 301 625

For further information and details please visit our website: [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)



10 myths about sun protection



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# 10 myths about sun protection



## 1 It is not possible to get sunburnt on windy, cloudy or cool days.

**FALSE** You can get burnt on windy, cloudy and cool days. Sunburn is caused by UV radiation, which is not related to temperature – a cooler or windy day in summer will have a similar UV index to a warmer day. If it's windy and you get a red face, it's likely to be sunburn. There's no such thing as 'windburn'.

You can also get sunburnt on cloudy days, as UV radiation can penetrate some clouds, and may even be more intense due to reflection off the bottom of the clouds.

Check the SunSmart UV Alert every day and protect your skin when UV levels are 3 or above, even when you are in the sun for short periods. The SunSmart UV alert is available at [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au) and in the weather section of most daily newspapers or at [www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv](http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv). A SunSmart app for iPhones that predicts the UV level for each day can also be downloaded from the iTunes App store.

## 2 If your cosmetics contain sunscreen, you do not need to use sunscreen.

**FALSE** You should wear sunscreen under your makeup if you're going to be in the sun. Foundations and moisturisers that contain sunscreen are fine if you are outside for short periods such as a quick trip to the shops at lunchtime. However, if you need to spend periods of time in the sun, use a separate sunscreen and reapply it every two hours – not just once in the morning. Be aware that most cosmetic products offer protection that is much lower than the maximum recommended SPF30+.

## 3 People with olive skin are not at risk of skin cancer.

**FALSE** People with olive skin can get skin cancer too. Regardless of skin type, if you spent your childhood in the sun without adequate protection you are at higher risk of developing skin cancer than someone who grew up with good sun protection. People who tan easily or are naturally dark skinned have a lower risk than people with fair skin that burns easily, but they are still at risk of skin damage and skin cancer. And generally when skin cancers do occur, they are detected at a later, more dangerous stage. Care still needs to be taken in the sun.

## 4 Solariums are a safe way to get a 'base tan' to start off the summer.

**FALSE** Solariums are not a safe way to tan. Solariums emit UV radiation that is up to three times stronger than the midday sun, so they can damage your skin even faster than a 'natural' suntan. Research shows that using a solarium can significantly increase your risk of melanoma. There is no safe way to tan – whether from the sun or a solarium.

## 5 People need plenty of sun exposure to avoid vitamin D deficiency.

**FALSE** You do not need to expose yourself to the sun during peak UV times to get enough vitamin D. On days when UV levels are moderate to high, most people get enough vitamin D through normal activity, even with sun protection.

In summer, a few minutes of sun exposure outside peak UV periods provides adequate vitamin D.

During winter, two to three hours of sun exposure spread throughout the week is sufficient for vitamin D in southern states. When UV levels are 3 or above, sun protection is still needed.

Increasing your sun exposure beyond the recommended level does not increase your vitamin D.

## 6 A fake tan darkens the skin, so that means your skin is protected from the sun.

**FALSE** Fake tanning lotion does not improve your body's ability to protect itself from the sun, so you will still need sun protection. Some fake tans have an SPF rating. However, like sunscreens, this only gives protection for around two hours, and then needs to be reapplied for continued protection.

## 7 You don't have to be concerned about skin cancer because if it happens you will see it, and it is easy to treat.

**FALSE** Skin cancer treatment can be much more serious than having a lesion 'burnt off'. It can include surgery, chemotherapy and can result in permanent scarring. Skin cancer can also metastasise and spread to other parts of your body. Each year, more than 1850 Australians die of skin cancer.

Be alert for any new moles or changes to existing moles and consult your GP immediately if you notice anything concerning. And remember, prevention is always better than cure.

## 8 Only sunbathers get skin cancer.

**FALSE** Excessive exposure to the sun does not just happen when deliberately seeking a tan. In a sunny country like Australia, we can be exposed to high levels of UV radiation during all sorts of daily activities, such as working outdoors, gardening, walking the dog or having a picnic. This sun exposure adds up over time, and increases our risk of skin cancer.

## 9 If you tan but don't burn, you don't need to bother with sun protection.

**FALSE** Even if you tan, you need sun protection. If your skin turns brown, it is a sign of sun damage, even if there is no redness or peeling. Your skin turns brown as a way of trying to protect itself because the UV rays are damaging living cells. A suntan offers limited sunburn protection of around SPF3, but doesn't protect against further DNA damage. If you tan easily, you are still at risk of skin cancer and need to use sun protection.

## 10 You can't get burnt in the car or through a window.

**FALSE** You can get burnt through a window. Glass reduces but does not completely block transmission of UV radiation, so you can still get burnt if you spend a long time in the car or behind a window when the UV is high. More commonly, people are burnt in cars with the windows down, where they can be exposed to high levels of UV radiation.

