

STAYING SAFE IN THE SUMMER SUN

Many of us spent the long winter months looking forward to going for hikes, working in our gardens, and swimming in the local lakes. Being outside feels so refreshing and invigorating that it's often difficult to remember how dangerous it can be.

How "sunscreen savvy" are you?

- ✓ *I use sunscreen before I go outside.* While sunscreen does offer some small measure of protection, the majority of us are not using enough. If applied as often as required for maximum protection, one person would use up an entire 4 oz. tube of sunscreen during a full day at the beach. Even sunscreens labeled as "water-resistant" should be reapplied every hour.
- ✓ *My sunscreen has a high SPF.* While higher numbers do offer slightly more protection, coverage does not double or triple. Although an SPF of 30 is slightly better than an SPF of 15, it does not provide twice the amount of protection.
- ✓ *I wear a hat.* Hats should feature a wide brim that circles all the way around, to protect the back of your neck and ears. But what about protecting the rest of your body? Understandably, no one wants to wear long-sleeved shirts or long pants when it's warm out. Shop instead for dark colored short-sleeve shirts and shorts that are made of tightly woven fabric.
- ✓ *I stay indoors during the "peak hours" of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.* Sun damage can occur at any time, in as little of 15 minutes. And since more than 75% of UV rays have the ability to pass through clouds, it is possible to burn even on a cloudy day.
- ✓ *I just stay out long enough to increase my Vitamin D.* According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "there is no known level of UV exposure that would increase vitamin D levels without also increasing skin cancer risk." Better sources of vitamin D include fresh fish, egg yolks, dairy products, and fortified cereals.
- ✓ *I only tan enough to look "healthy."* If your skin has changed color in any way, it has already sustained damage. With more than 1 million Americans diagnosed with skin cancer each year, no sun tan can truly be considered healthy.

Sunscreen is not meant to be a substitute for caution and common sense. Please be safe this summer!