



## Jackson County Department of Public Health

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2023-24  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 23, 2023

### PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM THE SUN

July marks Ultraviolet (UV) Awareness Month. While spending time outside is a great way to be physically active, reduce stress, and get vitamin D, it is important to understand how to be outside without raising your risk for skin cancer. According to the CDC, skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S. Most skin cancer is caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. UV rays are an invisible kind of radiation that comes from the sun, tanning beds, and sunlamps. Protection from UV rays is needed all year, not just during the summer. UV rays tend to be strongest between 10 AM and 4 PM daylight savings time. The UV index forecasts the strength of UV rays each day. If the UV index is 3 or higher, you should protect your skin from too much sun exposure.

The CDC offers some helpful tips on how to protect your skin from the sun:

- Shade—stay in the shade under an umbrella, tree, or other shelter. Use sunscreen or wear protective clothing when outside, even if in the shade.
- Clothing—wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts when possible. Clothes made of tightly woven fabric offers the best protection.
- Hat—wear a hat that has a brim all the way around to protect your face, ears, and back of the neck. Tightly woven fabric, such as canvas, works best.
- Sunglasses—sunglasses protect your eyes and the tender skin around your eyes from UV rays and reduces the risk of cataracts.
- Sunscreen—broad spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher filters out both UVA and UVB rays. Higher numbers of SPF indicate more protection. Reapply sunscreen if out in the sun more than 2 hours. Check your sunscreens expiration date!

The sun can damage your skin in as little as fifteen minutes. You can work and play outside without raising your skin cancer risk by protecting your skin from the sun. Follow the CDC's tips to protect yourself and your family from harmful UV rays.

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