

# Healthy Living



Healthy Living Newsletter

Summer 2007

## Skin Cancer: The Most Common Cancer

Nine hundred thousand Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer each year, making it the most common form of cancer. Exposure to the ultraviolet (UV) radiation in the sun's rays is responsible for almost all cases of basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma and is a major underlying cause of malignant melanoma. While basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas account for 90 percent of new cases, malignant melanoma is the most serious. And among the white population, malignant melanoma is on the rise. Over the past two decades, the incidence of melanoma in this population has doubled.

Unfortunately, many people make a dangerous assumption. They don't realize that UV radiation is made up of wavelengths shorter than those found in the visible spectrum. So they assume that if the sun is not shining brightly the UV radiation doesn't reach them. Wrong. Even when the sun's rays are not particularly bright (on a hazy day, for example), UV radiation are still dangerous. UV rays also reflect off any surface like water, cement, sand and snow. Two types of ultraviolet radiation increase the risk of cancer: ultraviolet A (UVA), which is not absorbed by ozone, and ultraviolet B (UVB). UVB is especially damaging to cells' DNA.

Source: [www.intelihealth.com](http://www.intelihealth.com)

## When to Protect Yourself from the Sun

You're not going to like this. You need to protect yourself from sun year round, not just during the summer or at the beach. The sun's UV rays can cause skin damage during any season or at any temperature. Relatively speaking, the hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. are the most hazardous for UV exposure in the continental United States. UV radiation is the greatest during the late spring and early summer in North America.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## Do You Have Freckles, Light Hair or a Light Complexion?

People with these characteristics are more susceptible to skin cancer. But everyone's at risk. Dark-skin people are most likely to develop cancer on the palms, soles, mucous membranes and other areas of lighter color.

Source: [www.healthline.com](http://www.healthline.com)

## Block that Sun

Of course, some exposure to the sun is good for you. It's a good source of vitamin D and, let's admit it, being in the sun is fun. Just don't overdo it. Here are some tips:

- Limit your sun exposure to 30 minutes or less per day.
- Avoid even minor sunburns.
- Stay out of the sun in the middle of the day (between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.) when the rays are the strongest.
- Pay attention to the UV index, which often is included in the weather report on television or in newspapers. This index is a relative measure of how damaging exposure to the sun will be on any particular day. An index below 5 means that exposure to UV will be low, 5 to 6 means moderate exposure, and 7 or higher indicates a dangerously high level of exposure. When the index is 10 or higher, stay indoors if possible.
- Cover up. Wear hats that shade your face and neck, long-sleeve shirts and long pants if possible. (The thicker the weave, the more protection you have.)
- Wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 that works against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Reapply sunscreen after sweating or swimming and periodically throughout the day.
- Avoid tanning booths.
- Wear UV-light-filtering sunglasses to protect eyelids and lenses.

Source: [www.intelihealth.com](http://www.intelihealth.com)



## Summer Safety

### Car Safety Before You Hit the Road

Safe drivers think safety long before they get behind the wheel. Here are some ways to make sure you've done what you can before you pull out of the driveway.

1. **Tend to your tires.** Change winter tires to summer or all-season tires. Your car will handle better. And check your tire pressure often. Tires lose air continually. Proper tire inflation gives you the best possible contact between the tire and the road. This also helps avoid blowouts, decreases the chance of tire failure, and increases gas mileage.
2. **Give your car its fluids.** Change your car's oil before you head out. Your vehicle's owner's manual lists the manufacturer's oil recommendations for different climates. While the car hood is up, check the coolant/antifreeze mixture in the radiator. The ideal ratio of coolant to water is 50/50. You can check this with a simple and inexpensive antifreeze tester found at most auto parts stores.
3. **Inspect belts and hoses.** In modern cars, belts and hoses last a long time, but they still have the potential to fail. Have a mechanic inspect them. And if your car is at least a couple of years old and you're not sure when your belts and hoses were last replaced, consider having them changed, especially before setting out on a long road trip.
4. **Examine your wiper blades.** The life expectancy of a wiper blade is one year. Blades can get dried out or chewed up during a hard winter. If yours do not make full contact with the windshield, replace them.
5. **Check the battery.** Extreme heat and cold put additional strain on your car's battery. If your battery is more than three years old, have it tested at a certified automotive repair facility. If you don't know how old it is, think about replacing it.
6. **Prepare an emergency kit.** Packing just a few simple items may save you tons of aggravation later. You might include:
  - Flashlight, flares and a first-aid kit
  - Jumper cables
  - Paper towels
  - Extra washer fluid
  - Nonperishable food
  - Jug of water
  - Basic tools (wrenches, screwdrivers, pliers, etc.)

Source: [www.edmunds.com](http://www.edmunds.com)

### Tow, tow, tow your boat, gently down the road.

Check your owner's manual to make sure your vehicle is properly equipped to handle a trailer hitch, and that it can handle the weight and load of the trailer you want to pull. You may also need larger mirrors to allow you to see what's next to and behind your vehicle and trailer. Install mirror extensions if necessary.

Drive slowly and smoothly. When towing a boat or any trailer, everything you do while driving needs to be done at significantly reduced speed compared to driving without a trailer. Be gradual and cautious when accelerating, turning, changing lanes and especially when braking. Plan your maneuvers well ahead of time. Be especially cautious when towing a slab-sided trailer in windy conditions. Also, familiarize yourself with trailer-specific traffic laws and stick to a reduced speed limit.

Know how to tow and you'll drive merrily, merrily, merrily down the road.

Source: [www.edmunds.com](http://www.edmunds.com)

### Safely Splashing

Does anything beat a cool swim on a hot day? Enjoy, but remember that more than 300 children drown each year in residential swimming pools according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. With children especially, remember these water guidelines:

- Always stay with your children in or near any body of water.
- Stay within an arm's length of infants or toddlers.
- It's best to have someone trained in CPR or life-saving techniques with you.
- Surround any pool with a sturdy fence at least four feet high.
- Make sure that gates to the pool are self-closing and latch at a height children can't reach.
- Avoid inflatable swimming aids like "floaties." They are not life vest substitutes and can give children a false sense of security.
- Swimming at the ocean demands extra precautions.
  - > Use life jackets on children who can't swim or are uncomfortable in the water.
  - > Use swim shoes to protect feet from sharp stones and seashells.
  - > Don't let anyone swim near fishermen, jet skiers or boats.
  - > Waves and currents are dangerous and can change quickly. Keep children in sight at all times.

Source: [www.intelihealth.com](http://www.intelihealth.com)



## Can You Ace this Summer Safety Quiz?

- Swimming lessons can help your younger children.
  - Be drown-proof.
  - Learn to enjoy water.
  - Play alone in a pool.
  - All of the above.
- To protect the head in case of a crash, a bike helmet should be
  - Snug but not too tight.
  - Worn straight on the head, not angled back.
  - Have straps that keep it secure.
  - All of the above.
- Your child touches a hot barbecue and you think he/she has a first-degree burn. What should you do?
  - Put butter on the burn.
  - Run cool water over the burned area.
  - Put ice on the burn.
  - Nothing. It is only a first-degree burn.
- If someone who usually begins to sunburn in 15 minutes will be outside for three hours, what minimum SPF should he or she use?
  - 5
  - 10
  - 15
  - 25
- To avoid food poisoning at a picnic or barbecue
  - Wash your hands frequently with clean water, especially before eating or handling food.
  - Don't eat food that has been left out for more than three hours.
  - Don't eat foods that are overcooked.
  - Both a and b.
- A child won't burn if he or she is outside all day during the summer and
  - Is sitting in the shade.
  - Wears a hat, long pants and a long-sleeve shirt.
  - It is cloudy.
  - None of the above.

## Answers

1. b. Swimming lessons can help younger children learn to enjoy the water, but don't rely on those lessons to teach your children to be drown-proof or to play alone in the water.

2. d. To protect the head in case of a crash, a bike helmet should be snug but not too tight; worn straight on the head, not angled back; and have straps that allow adjustments and keep it secure.

3. b. For a first-degree burn, you should usually run cool water over the burned area or place a cold compress on the area. Call your pediatrician unless the burn is very minor.

4. c. The SPF determines how long you can stay in the sun without burning. This person would need a sunscreen with SPF 15 (15 x 15 minutes = 225 minutes, or just over three hours.) An SPF of 10 would provide only 10 x 15 minutes, or 150 minutes.

5. a. To avoid food poisoning, wash your hands frequently, avoid foods left out for more than two (not three) hours and avoid undercooked foods.

6. d. Sitting in the shade; wearing a hat, long pants and a long-sleeve shirt; and being outside only when it's cloudy will not protect a child or anyone from sunburn if they are outside all day.

Sources: <http://pediatrics.about.com>, [www.safety-council.org](http://www.safety-council.org)