



Heat/Sun Injury and Hydration

How to Protect Yourself from a Sun Injury

What is the Problem?

Ultraviolet (UV) rays are an invisible form of radiation that is a part of sunlight.¹ The structure of skin cells can be changed by UV rays penetrating the skin. UVA, UVB, and UVC are the three types of UV rays.² Exposure to sunlight and heat can cause quick dehydration, and increases the risk of heat stress.³



Facts

- Sunlight exposure is highest during the summer months between 10:00am and 4:00pm.⁴
- Snow and light colored sand reflect UV light and increase the risk of sunburn.⁵
- Many drugs increase sensitivity to sunlight, increasing the risk of getting sunburned.⁶
- Sunburn is a painful sign of skin damage from spending too much time in the sun without protective sunscreen.⁷
- Overexposure to the sun leads to premature wrinkling, aging of the skin, age spots, and an increased risk of skin cancer.⁸
- When outdoors in the heat, your body's internal air conditioner kicks on (sweat) to cool your body off. It is important to stay hydrated.⁹
- Feeling thirsty is the first sign of dehydration.¹⁰
- Exposure to extreme heat can result in heat stress. Heat stress can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or heat rashes.¹¹

Prevention Tips

- Avoid being outdoors during midday if the sun is intense.¹²
- Use sunscreen with at least Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 15.¹³
- Cover up with clothing, and wear a brimmed hat.¹⁴
- Wear sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays.¹⁵
- Hang out in the shade, if possible, to avoid sun exposure.¹⁶
- Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours.¹⁷
- Drink water before, during, and after physical activity.¹⁸
- Stay away from drinks that have caffeine or are loaded with sugar.¹⁹



Plan of the Week (POW):

The sun can affect your skin at any time, not just in the summer, in warm places, or when it is sunny outside.²⁰ **ALWAYS** wear sunscreen.²¹ **NEVER** sit in direct sunlight without protection. **NEVER** use sunscreen that is more than 1 year old.²² **ALWAYS** be smart and stay hydrated.²³

References

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NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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