

Sun Safety

Enjoy the sunshine safely

Hiking offers overwhelming health benefits for those who take to the trail but the dangers associated with spending too much time in the sun are very real. According to the American Cancer Society, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetime¹. American Hiking Society is working with the Environmental Protection Agency's SunWise program to reduce the incidence of skin cancer by teaching hikers how to protect themselves from overexposure to the sun.

Limit time in the midday sun. Try to limit exposure during the day when the sun's rays are strongest — between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Choose hikes that provide shade at these times and save your open hikes for early in the day. Remember that UV rays bounce off sand, snow, concrete, and water, increasing your risk of exposure.

Wear a hat and cover up. A hat with a wide brim protects areas prone to overexposure, such as your eyes, ears, face, and the back of your neck. Whenever possible wear clothing that protects against UV rays.

Wear sunglasses that block UV rays. Check the label when buying sunglasses. Sunglasses that provide 99-100% UVA and UVB protection will greatly reduce sun exposure that can lead to cataracts and other forms of eye damage.

Always use sunscreen. Apply a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher half an hour before going outdoors to achieve adequate UV protection. Use products that provide broad-spectrum protection against both UVA and UVB rays. Reapply every two hours or more frequently if exercising outdoors. Even waterproof sunscreen can come off when you sweat.

Watch the UV index. The UV Index was developed by the National Weather Service and EPA to help people plan activities to prevent overexposure to UV radiation. To learn more about this daily forecast of UV intensity and to sign up to receive your local UV Index and UV Alert via email or on your smart phone, visit www.epa.gov/sunwise.

See your doctor. Early detection is paramount to a successful skin cancer treatment. Know the skin you're in. If you notice any changes, see a doctor.



¹ American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2010*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2010.