

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Stay safe in the sun this summer

Get outside this summer. There are plenty of benefits to being outdoors this summer. It's a great way to improve mental wellness, and it helps to reduce stress and anxiety. Time outside can increase your vitamin D and physical activity, too.

However, without proper protection those sunny days can raise your risk of skin cancer.

Most skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. UV light is the invisible radiation that comes from the sun and can damage skin cells. Protecting yourself against UV rays is important year-round. It is especially important in the summer, when the sun is strongest. In Alberta, UV rays are typically at their peak from 11 am to 3 pm.

Below are three important tips for sun safety:

Check the UV Index before leaving home. The UV Index indicates the strength of the sun's daily UV rays and can help inform the steps you take to protect yourself. The higher the UV index number, the stronger the sun's rays are and the more important it is to stay out of the sun. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, any time the index is at a three or above, you must take extra precautions to protect your skin.

Use sunscreen and reapply often. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Remember to apply generously and protect the skin that's not covered by clothing. You'll also want to reapply as needed. Most sunscreens should be reapplied every two hours, especially if you've been swimming or sweating.



Throw on some shades. Designer or drug store, sunglasses don't have to be expensive to be effective. The key is to choose shades that are sized to fully cover your eyes and offer 100 per cent UVA and UVB protection.