







Prevent skin cancer  
**Be SunSmart!**

Service hotline  
**3656 0800**  
[www.cancer-fund.org/sunsmart](http://www.cancer-fund.org/sunsmart)






## How does UV cause skin cancer?

Unprotected exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is by far the most common cause of skin cancer. UVA causes skin to darken and age and UVB causes sunburn. Both result in permanent damage to skin cells and can lead to non-melanoma skin cancer. The longer you are exposed to the sun, the higher your risk.

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**7<sup>th</sup>** Non-melanoma skin cancer is the seventh most common cancer in Hong Kong\*
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**The number of new cases sharply increased over the last decade and since 2015, there have been more than 1,000 new cases each year in Hong Kong\***
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**Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the main preventable cause of non-melanoma skin cancer**
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**UV Index levels of more than 3 indicate the light is strong enough to cause sunburn**

Source: \* Hong Kong Cancer Registry, Hospital Authority 2018 (figures in 2016).





## Five hot tips for being SunSmart

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**SLIP**  
**Slip on a shirt**  
 Clothing protects the skin from UV radiation
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**SLOP**  
**Slop on some sunscreen**  
 Sunscreen filters out most of the UV radiation before it reaches the skin
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**SLAP**  
**Slap on a wide-brimmed hat**  
 Hats can substantially reduce the amount of UV radiation reaching the face, neck, ears and head
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**SLIDE**  
**Slide on some sunglasses**  
 Protect the eyes from UV radiation, especially the lens and the cornea
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**SEEK**  
**Seek some shade**  
 Staying in the shade can reduce your overall exposure to UV radiation by up to 75%<sup>^</sup>

Source: ^ Guideline to shade, Cancer Council Australia 2013

## What causes strong UV light?

We're all exposed to UV radiation from the sun on a daily basis. UV radiation is most dangerous when the sun's rays are at their most direct and intense, which depends on:

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**Time of year** – UV radiation remains high all year round, but the months of highest risk in Hong Kong are usually July to October.
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**Time of day** – UV rays are strongest between 11am and 4pm, and are most intense around midday.
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**Reflection** – UV radiation can be reflected from surfaces such as sand, light paint, tiles, cement and water, and can therefore reach your skin even if you're wearing a hat.
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**Clouds** – UV radiation is both absorbed and scattered by clouds and haze, but your skin can still burn on a cloudy day.

Check the Observatory's UV Index forecast before leaving home. The higher the UV Index level, the stronger the UV light.

## How to slop on that sunscreen?



For an average-sized adult, at least seven teaspoons (5ml each; 35ml in total) of sunscreen should be applied to the body (including the face,

neck, ears, back and front of the body, the arms and legs). For children, half a teaspoon (2.5ml) should be applied to each main area of the body. Apply the sunscreen generously, 15-30 minutes before you go outside. To protect your skin, always use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of more than 30, and graded PA+ or above.

A tan is not a sign of good health: it's a sign that you have been exposed to enough UV radiation (from the sun or a solarium) to damage your skin. Sunscreen can help to protect your skin, although it cannot shield you completely from the effects of UV radiation. It is important to reapply sunscreen every two hours.

## Get off that sunbed






Just like the sun, sun lamps and sunbeds in solariums emit UV rays that harm the skin. By using these devices you are not only damaging your skin and causing premature ageing,

you're also greatly increasing your risk of developing skin cancer. Research has shown that people who start using sunbeds before the age of 35 increase their risk of malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, by 59%<sup>#</sup>.

Source: # World Health Organisation 2017

## What to look out for?

Skin cancer takes different forms and can be found on various parts of the body – from the face, scalp and ears to the lips, shoulders and legs. Here's a brief explanation of what to look for:

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**Basal cell carcinoma:** May start as small, shiny, pink to red lumps or red scaly patches. Gradually turns crusty and grows wider. Sometimes itchy and occasionally bleeds. May develop into an ulcer.
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**Squamous cell carcinoma:** Often appears as pink lumps. Skin may be hard on the surface, bleeds easily and may develop into an ulcer.
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**Melanoma:** Looks like harmless (non-cancerous) moles, but over time may become larger, with the shape becoming irregular. Their colour may vary from brown, black, blue, red, white, or light grey.

If you are concerned about an area of skin or a mole, contact your doctor. Find more information about skin cancer and tips on staying SunSmart on our website:

[www.cancer-fund.org/sunsmart](http://www.cancer-fund.org/sunsmart).

## Our support

Call us if you or someone you know would like to benefit from our **FREE** cancer support services.

Service hotline  
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