

# Sun Safety

## What are UV rays?

UV rays are a type of radiation that come from the sun. A UV index predicts how strong the UV rays are daily. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses a UV Index scale of 1, which means "Low", through 11 or higher, which indicates "Extreme" UV ray strength. The higher the index, the more important it is to practice sun safety tips to prevent sun damage to your skin.

**When the UV index is over 3, protect yourself from sun exposure.**



(link to the EPA UV Index search)

Scan this QR code to  
check the daily UV Index  
in your city or town!

ACADEMIC  
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CORPS



### Blackstone Valley Partnership for Public Health

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*Serving the Towns of Blackstone, Douglas, Hopedale, Mendon, Millville,  
Northbridge, Upton, and Uxbridge*

# What can you do to practice sun safety?

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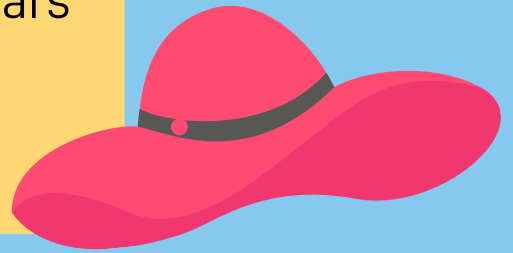
Wear long-sleeved shirts with a tightly woven fabric to protect from UV rays. Darker, dry clothing works better.



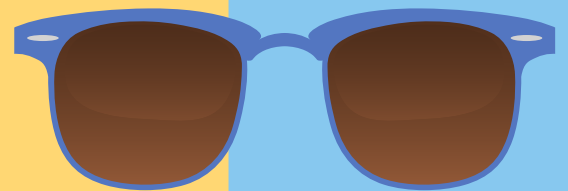
Stay in shady areas when you are outside, if possible.



Wear a hat with a wide brim to protect your ears and neck. Avoid hats with holes in them, like straw hats or mesh baseball hats.



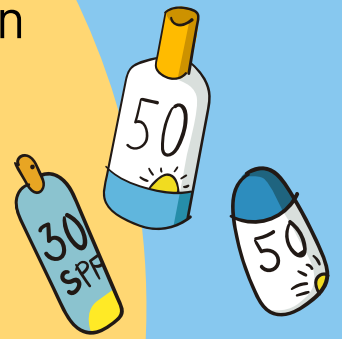
Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes. Wrap-around sunglasses work best, and make sure they protect from UVA and UVB radiation, which most sunglasses do. For those who need to wear prescription glasses, sunglasses can be made to match your prescription in certain cases.



# What is the best way to apply sunscreen?

Sunscreen is a great way to protect your skin from sun damage.

1. Wear sunscreen of 15 SPF or higher.
2. Make sure to cover your whole body with a thick layer of sunscreen. Ask for help when trying to reach difficult areas like your back.
3. Re-apply every 2 hours or after towelling off, sweating, or swimming.
4. Remember to check the expiration date of the sunscreen!
5. Store your sunscreen away from high temperatures to increase how long it lasts.



**Applying sunscreen should be combined with other sun safety measures to best protect yourself and your skin.**

# How can you tell if you are sunburnt?

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If minor sunburn occurs, you can notice it through the following symptoms:

- Red, warm, tender, or swollen skin, blistering, headache, fever, nausea, or fatigue
- Eyes can be sunburned and become red, dry, painful, and "feel gritty"

Pain can last anywhere between 6-48 hours, and the skin will typically begin to peel 3-8 days following initial exposure.

**Minor sunburn may look like this:**



*Information sourced from:*

[https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic\\_info/sun-safety.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/sun-safety.htm)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/sunexposure/sunburn.html>

# What should you do if you are sunburnt?

For first aid, you can do the following:

- Use over-the-counter painkillers like ibuprofen, aspirin, or acetaminophen for headache or fever.
- Keep hydrated and drink plenty of water.
- If skin is unbroken, gently apply cool, wet towels to skin for pain relief.
- Avoid further exposure until the burn has resolved.
- Apply topical moisturizing cream, aloe, or 1% hydrocortisone cream.
- Hydrocortisone cream (0.5-1%) can improve healing.
- If blistering occurs, lightly bandage the area with gauze to prevent infection.
- Do not break the blisters! This can risk infection and slow healing.
- When blisters break and the skin peels, dried fragments can be removed and antiseptic ointment/hydrocortisone can be applied.

**If your sunburn covers over 15% of your body, you experience dehydration, have a fever of over 101 degrees F, or suffer extreme pain that lasts longer than 48 hours, seek medical attention.**