

# Staying summer and skin smart

## A skin check and sun safety guide

This is general information only. Please consult your GP if you have any concerns regarding your skin health or to organise a skin check.



# Skin checks - What to look for

Did you know that two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer by the time they are 70? No matter what age, it's never too late to be smart in the sun and reduce your risk of skin cancer.

The good news is that skin cancer is largely preventable and the earlier it is caught, the better your chance of survival.

Early detection is vital because once skin cancer (especially melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer) has spread, treatment options can be limited.

Melanoma grows secretly, often without symptoms. Performing your own skin and mole checks is therefore very important.

If a mole starts to change in size, shape or colour, appears out of the blue, itches or bleeds – this may be a sign of skin cancer. Follow the **ABCD** when checking your skin and moles:

## A

**Asymmetry** - Most moles have matching left/right or top/bottom halves.



## B

**Border irregular** - Ragged or poorly defined border



## C

**Colours that are unusual or uneven** - Brown, tan and black are common, but pink, blue, grey, and white are unusual



## D

**Diameter** - A mole that increases in size or appears different to surrounding moles



A melanoma only shows the classic ABCD features when it has grown to a certain size. Do not wait until your mole has developed all the features.

# Checking your skin

- Find a well light area, preferably with a full length mirror.
- Undress completely. Start from the top of your head, scan from one side to the other paying special attention to your eyebrows, around the eyes, nose, and ears.
- Be sure to check your entire body as skin cancers can occur in parts of the body not exposed to the sun, for example, soles of the feet, between the fingers and toes and under the nails.
- Use a hand held mirror to check hard to see spots, like your back and scalp.
- Ask a family member, partner, or friend to check your back and other places that you cannot see.



The Australian Cancer Council recommends all adults should self check their skin and moles **every 3 months** and have their skin and moles checked by a skin cancer specialist **once a year**.

# Sun protection

You can protect yourself in the sun in five ways - **slip on a shirt, slap on a hat, slide on sunglasses** and **seek shade**. The Cancer Council Australia recommends choosing sunscreens that are:

- Broad spectrum (that will filter UVA and UVB radiation)
- Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30 or above
- Water-resistant

Sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before going out in the sun and should be re-applied every 2 hours or more often if perspiring or swimming.

# Sun protection and UV alerts

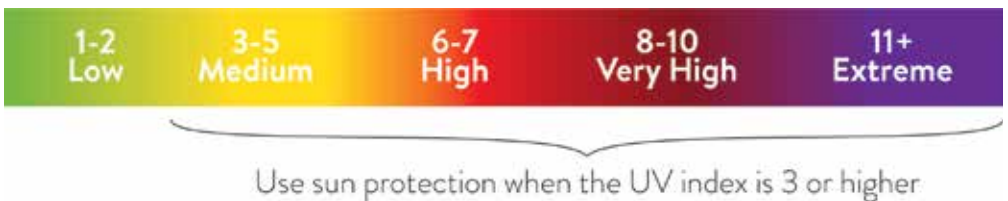
## Reading ultraviolet radiation (UV) alerts

UV radiation can damage your skin when it reaches 3 or more on the UV index. You can find the UV index forecast at the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website at [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) or if you have an Andriod or iphone, you can download the SunSmart App.

Both the BOM website and the Sunsmart App will give you the UV forecast and let you know what times you need to use sun protection. When the UV index is 3 or above, the Cancer Council recommends you slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, slide on sunglasses and seek shade.

### Medication and sun sensitivity

Some medications can increase your skin sensitivity to the sun's UV rays. These medications include some anti-depressants, anti-diabetics, anti-inflammatories. If you take any medication on a regular basis, refer to the product information leaflet or consult with your GP.



## More information

For more information contact your Neami support worker.

## References

The Cancer Council Australia - [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)

The Bureau of Meteorology - [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

The SunSmart App - [www.sunsmart.com.au/tools/interactive-tools/free-sunsmart-app](http://www.sunsmart.com.au/tools/interactive-tools/free-sunsmart-app)