



Sun Safety

Avoid Harmful Rays

The summer is a great time to play and work outside. But be sure you stay safe under the sun. Later in the day, grass and sand reflect light, so you might be getting a double dose of radiation on the beach or while playing ball. These exposures can lead to an increased chance of skin cancer.

UV radiation is made of rays of ultraviolet light. Our eyes cannot normally see it. It comes



from the sun in waves. Different waves have different effects. Too much exposure can increase the risk for skin cancer, harm the immune system, cause cataracts and make the skin age quicker. UVA waves are the radiation that ages the skin and causes it to wrinkle. UVB waves cause sunburn. Both kinds can cause skin cancer (melanoma). Even when the sky is cloudy, it is important to be careful. UV radiation can reach the Earth even through the clouds.

Getting sunburned is especially dangerous. If children get one or two bad sunburns the chance of getting skin cancer when they are adults doubles.

Pale-skinned people are in more danger than dark-skinned people for getting skin cancer. However, dark skinned people should still use sunscreen because they are not completely protected from the sun's harmful rays. Both dark and light-

skinned people should wear sunglasses. Unlike skin color, dark eye color does not protect your eyes from the sun's rays.

What to do for a Sunburn

1. Take a cool bath or apply a cool, wet washcloth to the burn.
2. If the pain is bad or there are blisters, see a doctor. Sometimes blisters do not show right away so check the painful area frequently.
3. **DO NOT** put ice on the burn.
4. **DO NOT** put ointments or butter on the burn. These can block sweating, which is important.
5. **DO NOT** use sprays and creams that list "benzocaine" or other anti-itch medications as these may cause allergic reactions.
6. Once the sunburn starts peeling, you can apply a moisturizing cream. Look for creams that list Hydrocortisone 1% as an active ingredient.

What is the UV Index?

The ozone layer shields the Earth from harmful UV radiation. Ozone depletion, as well as seasonal and weather variations, causes different amounts of UV radiation to reach the Earth at any given time. The UV Index is a daily forecast of the UV radiation levels people might experience. The Index predicts the next day's levels on a 0 to 10+ scale, helping people determine appropriate sun protection behaviors.



An easy way to tell how much UV exposure you are getting is

to look for your shadow. If your shadow is taller than you are (in the early morning and late

afternoon), your UV exposure is likely to be low. If your shadow is shorter than you are (around midday), you are being exposed to high levels of UV radiation. Seek shade and protect your skin and eyes. Don't forget that water, sand, pavement, and grass reflect UV rays even under a tree, near a building, or beneath a shady umbrella.

Remember that UV exposure is especially strong if you are working or playing between the peak hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.

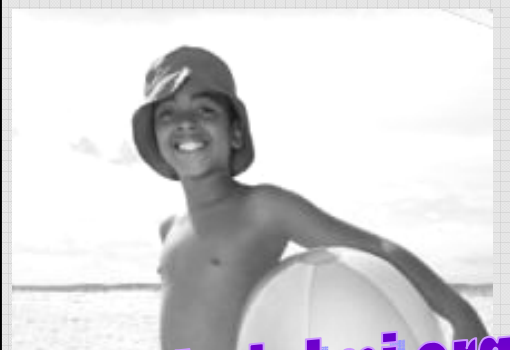


Sun Safety Tips:

- Avoid the sun from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00p.m. Noon is the very worst time to be outside.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible, especially during the middle of the afternoon.
- Wear sunscreen. Make sure your sunscreen is at least SPF 15. (SPF = "Sun Protection Factor.")
- Stay away from sunlamps and tanning beds. These give off dangerous UV rays also.
- Wear protective clothing. Wear loose, long-sleeved shirts and pants. Light colors are better because they reflect the sun's rays back to the sky and keep you cool.
- Wear hats that protect your face. Make sure that it has a wide brim.
- Wear sunglasses. The darker the lenses the better. Large lens also protect more of your eyes. The label on the sunglasses should say that they block 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays.

For more information about sun safety, contact the Berrien County Health Department at:

926-7121



www.bchdmi.org

The Berrien County Health Department has four locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone
P.O. Box 706
926-7121

M-139 Office
2106 S. M-139
927-5623

Niles

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Three Oaks

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