

## Sun Safety for Parents/Carers for Children in Primary Schools

### Why is sun safety important?

Did you know that?

- One blistering sunburn in childhood more than doubles a person's chance of developing melanoma later in life
- Skin cancer is the UK's most common and fastest rising cancer and is now one of the biggest cancer killers in 15-34 year olds.
- 80% of all skin cancers are caused by over-exposure to UVR from the sun and/or sunbeds making it skin cancer largely **PREVENTABLE**.

**Did you know?** If your shadow is shorter than you, you could burn!

**Remember your child needs to wear sun protection at school.** Make sure you put lots on them before they go into school. It's advisable to wear it on overcast and cloudy days too.

You don't have to buy expensive brands, cheap ones are fine as long as they are at least factor 15 and UVA 4 star rated.

Check the expiry date on your sunscreen - most only last a year or 2. Make sure you store it in a cool place or the protective chemicals can be ruined.

Always remember vulnerable areas like ears, back of hands, neck and feet. **Use sunscreen together with shade and clothing** to avoiding getting caught out by sunburn

**Hats:** Wide brimmed or legionnaire styles offer the most protection

**Shade is best for children** - encourage them to play in shady areas at break and lunchtimes when the sun is out

**Sunglasses:** When choosing sunglasses look for one of the following:

- 'CE Mark' and British Standard (BS EN 1836:1997)
- UV 400 label
- 100% UV protection written on the label or sticker

Also, make sure that the glasses offer protection at the side of the eye, for example, choose wraparound styles. Toy sunglasses can do more harm than good.

**The Heatwave Plan for England 2015** recommended that when the temperature is 30°C+, children should not take part in vigorous physical activity. Children should also stay hydrated in the sun, water is best.

### The Vitamin D debate

The sun makes us feel good and we all need the sun to survive. Sunlight helps your body produce Vitamin D which is important for developing and protecting strong and healthy teeth and bones.

We can also get Vitamin D from certain foods including milk, fish, egg yolks, and fortified

cereals. However, exposure to UVB radiation is the most efficient way to boost Vitamin D supply.

“15 to 20 minutes of unprotected sun exposure, without skin reddening or burning, per day should be sufficient for most people to produce the required vitamin D levels. Most healthy diets contain vitamin D, but where appropriate levels can be increased by supplements or a diet containing vitamin D rich foods, e.g. Fish & Milk”  
Professor Andrew Wright, Consultant Dermatologist, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### **Risk factors**

The main risk factors for skin cancer are:

- Over exposure to sunlight
- Having fair skin that burns easily in the strong sun
- Having lots of moles or freckles
- Red or fair hair
- A personal or family history of skin cancer
- Having light coloured eyes
- Having been burnt by sun in the past

Remember if you or your child have skin changes that you are concerned about - see your GP.



**Further information is available from:**

<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/sun-uv-and-cancer/how-the-sun-and-uv-cause-cancer>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/skin/Pages/Sunsafer.aspx>

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