

# SUN SAFETY

## AND SKIN CANCER

The Facts, Prevention  
and Early Detection

*Everything you need to  
know, to enjoy the sun safely  
and detect skin cancer early.*

This booklet has been produced by national  
melanoma and skin cancer charity, Skcin:  
The Karen Clifford Skin Cancer Charity  
Registered Charity No: 1150048  
For further information visit: [www.skcin.org](http://www.skcin.org)





# SKIN CANCER

## THE FACTS

**ALMOST ALL SKIN CANCERS ARE CAUSED BY OVER-EXPOSURE TO ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION (UVR). ALL SKIN TYPES CAN BE DAMAGED BY UVR, DAMAGE IS PERMANENT, IRREVERSIBLE INCREASES WITH EACH EXPOSURE AND CAN RESULT IN DEATH.**

- Non-melanoma skin cancer is the UK's most common cancer.
- Malignant melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer is now one of the most common cancers in young adults (aged 15-34) in the UK.
- Over the last twenty-five years, rates of melanoma in Britain have risen faster than any other common cancer.
- According to Cancer Research UK, 1 in 36 UK males and 1 in 47 UK females will be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer in their lifetime.
- **OVER 86% OF ALL MELANOMA AND THE MAJORITY OF ALL OTHER SKIN CANCERS ARE CAUSED BY DAMAGE FROM UV, MAKING THE DISEASE ALMOST ENTIRELY PREVENTABLE!**

### REMEMBER

**BY ADOPTING SIMPLE  
SUN SAFE PRACTICES  
SKIN CANCER CAN  
BE PREVENTED AND  
LIVES SAVED.**

# SOLAR UVR

## THE FACTS

SOLAR ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION (UVR) IS A KNOWN CARCINOGEN, IT CANNOT BE SEEN OR FELT AND IS NOT RELATED TO TEMPERATURE. IT CAN PASS THROUGH CLOUD, BOUNCE OFF REFLECTIVE SURFACES AND IS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF SKIN CANCER.

### **But surely it won't happen to me?**

Wrong. skin cancer doesn't discriminate where age is concerned. The simple fact is that if you fail to protect your skin from UV radiation you're putting yourself at risk. If you allow your skin to become red and burn, this risk can dramatically increase.

There's no avoiding the fact that skin cancer is on the increase and it's a killer. So, before you strip off and feel the warmth of the sun on your skin this summer, whether on a beach abroad or simply enjoying a picnic or a bike ride in this country, ask yourself one question: **Am I being sun safe, or am I dying to get a tan?**

### **WARNING**

**WE ARE ALL AT RISK OF DEVELOPING SKIN CANCER. PROTECT YOUR SKIN AND LEARN HOW TO SPOT EARLY WARNING SIGNS**



# SUN BURN

## THE FACTS

THE SIMPLE FACT THAT YOUR SKIN HAS CHANGED COLOUR IS A SIGN OF DAMAGE. OUR SKIN TURNS RED WITHIN 2-6 HOURS OF BEING BURNT AND CONTINUES TO DEVELOP FOR THE NEXT 24 TO 72 HOURS.

**Sunburn** is a reaction to over-exposure of UV radiation caused by the sun and/or sunbeds. The superficial layers of the skin release chemicals that cause our blood vessels to expand and leak fluid causing swelling, pain and redness. Without sun protection, UV radiation penetrates deep into the layers of the skin causing damage to the skin cells.

**UVB** rays reach the outer layer of your skin, they are burning rays and the primary cause of sunburns and skin cancer. **UVA** rays penetrate the middle of the skin and also contribute to skin burning, skin cancer and wrinkling / premature ageing.

### WARNING

UVA AND UVB HAVE BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO CAUSE DNA CELL DAMAGE WHICH CAUSES SKIN CANCER





# SUNBEDS THE FACTS

SUNBEDS ARE NOT A SAFE ALTERNATIVE TO SUN-BATHING. SUNBEDS EMIT THE SAME HARMFUL UV RAYS AS THE SUN, CAUSING DNA DAMAGE THAT INCREASES A PERSON RISK OF DEVELOPING DIFFERENT KINDS OF SKIN CANCER, INCLUDING THE MOST SERIOUS FORM MELANOMA.

There is so much evidence to support this, that the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified sunbeds as a Group 1 carcinogen. This is its highest cancer risk category. Reports further conclude that the risk of cancer is significantly higher when exposure takes place at a younger age.

A common misconception is that a sunbed tan will prepare or protect your skin before you go abroad. The fact is, that sunbeds are no safer than exposure to the sun itself and the intensity of UV rays from some sunbeds can be 10-15 times higher than the Mediterranean midday, summer sun. Once the tan fades the damage remains, which can result in very serious consequences over time.

## WARNING

REMEMBER THAT  
IT'S ILLEGAL TO USE  
SUNBEDS IN THE UK  
IF YOU'RE UNDER  
THE AGE OF 18.

# THE SOLAR UV INDEX



- The UV index is a 5 category solar UV forecast
- The higher the number the stronger the UVR and the less time it takes damage to occur.
- **When the UV index reaches 3 or above, sun protection measures should be taken.**

## VITAMIN D AND UV

Despite the serious health risks, UV radiation, in small amounts, is the most efficient way to boost our Vitamin D supply, so it's important to strike the right balance. Whilst there is no one-size-fits-all level of exposure - for most, Vitamin D can efficiently and sufficiently be produced in around 15-20 minutes of sun exposure per day, from doses of UV below which cause reddening or burning of the skin.

### REMEMBER

YOU CAN CHECK THE  
UV FORECAST AT ANY  
TIME AND FOR ANY  
LOCATION IN THE  
UK BY VISITING  
[SKCIN.ORG](http://SKCIN.ORG)

# FIVE S's OF SUN SAFETY

SKCIN RECOMMEND FIVE  
SIMPLE STEPS TO SUN SAFETY.  
WHEN UV LEVELS REACH 3 OR ABOVE  
SLIP, SLOP, SLAP, SLIDE, SHADE.



Remember it's not just sunbathing that puts you at risk, but being in the sun without adequate protection. If you regularly take part in outdoor hobbies or sports, or work outdoors, you could be at greater risk. Make sure you use all five S's of sun safety and NEVER BURN!

1. **SLIP** on a t-shirt
2. **SLOP** on SPF 30+ sunscreen
3. **SLAP** on a broad brimmed hat
4. **SLIDE** on quality sunglasses
5. **SHADE** from the sun when possible

*See overleaf for further guidance.*

## WARNING

UVA AND UVB HAVE  
BEEN DEMONSTRATED  
TO CAUSE DNA CELL  
DAMAGE WHICH  
CAUSES SKIN  
CANCER



## 1: SLIP on sun protective clothing

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- Clothing can be one of the most effective barriers between our skin and the sun.
- Clothing should cover as much skin as possible.
- Always keep shoulders covered, they can easily burn.
- A closer weave fabric will provide better protection.
- A high UPF rated fabric provides best protection.

## 2: SLOP on SPF 30+ sunscreen

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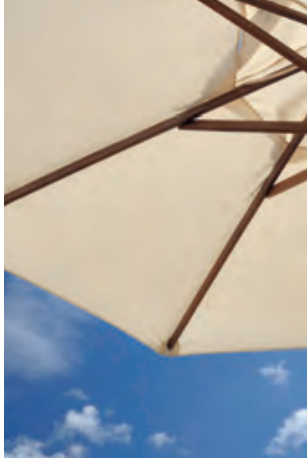
- No sunscreen provides complete protection.
- Never rely on sunscreen alone to protect skin.
- Always use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30 or above, preferably water resistant.
- Make sure it's broad-spectrum and carries a UVA symbol (if it has a star rating, use a minimum 4 star).
- Store in an accessible, cool place and remember to check the expiry date.
- Apply a generous amount to clean, dry, exposed skin.
- Apply 20 minutes before going outdoors and once out.
- Regardless of the instructions all sunscreens should be reapplied at least every 2 hours (more often if perspiring) and straight after swimming.
- Protect your lips with an SPF 30+ lip balm.

## 3: SLAP on a wide brimmed hat

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- Wear a wide brimmed hat to shade the face, neck & ears. Legionnaire hats (with a flap that covers the neck and joins the front peak) or a hat (with a minimum 7.5cm brim) are the most effective.
- A close weave or UPF rated fabric provides best protection.
- Baseball caps do not provide adequate shade.





## WARNING

No matter how easily we tan, **WE ARE ALL AT RISK!** However, those at greater risk typically fall into one or more of the following categories:

## 4: SLIDE on quality sunglasses

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- Solar UV radiation can be damaging to the eyes, so always wear quality sunglasses.
- Overall protection depends on the quality of the lens as well as the design.
- Look for the European CE mark, which indicates a safe level of protection.
- Those labelled with a high EPF (which ranges from 1-10) will provide best protection.
- Ensure they are close fitting and wrap around to stop solar UVR entering the sides and top.
- Remember price and darkness of the lens have no reflection on the quality of protection.

## 5: SHADE from the sun when possible

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- Shade can provide a good barrier from UV rays.
- Seek shade whenever possible, particularly at the hottest times of the day between 11am and 3pm when UV penetration is strongest.
- Keep toddlers and babies in the shade at all times.
- Never rely on shade alone, always combine with personal protection measures.

## WHO IS MOST AT RISK OF SKIN CANCER?

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- RED OR FAIR HAIR
- FAIR SKIN THAT BURNS MORE EASILY
- LOTS OF MOLES AND/OR FRECKLES
- A FAMILY HISTORY OF SKIN CANCER / MELANOMA
- A HISTORY OF SUNBURN
- A HISTORY OF TANNING AND/OR SUNBED USE

# CHILDREN AND BABIES

ONE BLISTERING SUNBURN IN CHILDHOOD OR ADOLESCENCE MORE THAN DOUBLES A PERSON'S CHANCE OF DEVELOPING MELANOMA IN LATER LIFE. THE DAMAGE IS IRREPARABLE.

- Use a minimum SPF 30 (ideally SPF 50) sunscreen.
- Ensure it is broad-spectrum, to provide both UVA and UVB protection - ideally UVA rated 5 or 4 star.
- Apply liberally, ensuring good coverage.
- Don't forget shoulders, ears, nose, cheeks and feet.
- Apply 20 minutes before children go outdoors.
- Reapply at least every 2 hours.
- Reapply immediately after swimming / towelling.
- Keep toddlers and babies in the shade as much as possible, particularly when abroad.
- Always keep shoulders covered!
- Use UV protective sun suits & broad-brimmed or legionnaire hats for added protection.
- Don't forget to ensure they are protected prior to going to school or nursery and throughout the day during school / pre-school hours!



# CHECKING YOUR SKIN

THE SOONER A SKIN CANCER IS IDENTIFIED AND TREATED, THE BETTER YOUR CHANCE OF AVOIDING SURGERY OR, IN THE CASE OF A SERIOUS MELANOMA OR OTHER SKIN CANCER, POTENTIAL DISFIGUREMENT OR EVEN DEATH.

- Skin cancers seldom hurt and are much more frequently seen than felt.
- Get to know your skin and what is normal for you so that you can easily identify any changes.
- Undress completely, make sure you have good light, use a mirror and/or get someone to help you to check hard to see spots.
- Make sure you check your entire body - for example soles of the feet, between fingers and toes and under nails.

## WARNING

IT IS IMPORTANT  
TO REGULARLY CHECK  
YOUR SKIN FOR SIGNS  
OF CHANGE TO DETECT  
CANCER EARLY. IT COULD  
SAVE YOUR LIFE!



# SKIN CANCER

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

### ACTINIC (OR SOLAR) KERATOSIS



- Pre-cancerous skin lesions that are slow growing with the potential to develop into cancer.
- Commonly found on the head, neck, back of hands & forearms.
- Usually appear as small brown, pink or whitish, scaly, red, single or multiple rough spots, smaller than 1cm in diameter.
- They can feel rough and cause soreness, irritation, discomfort or pain, or may just pose a cosmetic nuisance.

### INTRA-EPIDERMAL CARCINOMA (BOWEN'S DISEASE)



- Pre-cancerous skin lesions that are slow growing.
- Most commonly found on the head, neck and lower limbs.
- Presents as an asymptomatic sharply demarcated, scaly, red, pink or salmon coloured patch or plaque.
- The border may be irregular.
- May be flat, scaly, crusted, eroded, ulcerated, velvety or warty.
- Due to asymptomatic nature lesions may become very large.



Skin cancer can be divided into two main groups;  
Non-Melanoma Skin Cancer (NMSC) & Malignant Melanoma (MM).  
It is also important to look out for pre-cancerous skin lesions  
which are a warning sign that you are prone to skin cancer.  
There are 2 main types of pre-cancerous skin lesions:  
Actinic (or Solar) Keratosis and Intra-Epidermal Carcinoma  
(Bowen's Disease). Remember the earlier skin cancer is identified,  
the easier it is to treat, so if in doubt - get it checked out!

**BASAL CELL CARCINOMA  
(NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCER)**



- The most common type of non-melanoma skin cancer.
- The majority occur on sun exposed areas i.e. the face, neck and ears.
- Slow growing and rarely spread anywhere else on the body.
- Can appear in different shapes and sizes.
- Look out for pearly, shiny lumps, skin ulcer, or patch of dry skin that won't heal. In extreme cases, large or neglected BCC's can cause extensive local invasion.

**SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA  
(NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCER)**



- Typically present on the face, ears, lips, mouth and hands and grows at variable rates with varied appearance.
- Usually presents a scaly lump, nodule, ulcer, or non-healing sore.
- Often start as a small, hard, white, or skin coloured lumps.
- Rarely spreads, but left untreated will increase in size.
- Could spread to local lymph nodes or around the body.
- In extreme cases can be life threatening.



# DETECTING MELANOMA

- Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer.
- Melanoma most commonly appear as a new spot or mole, or an existing spot or mole that changes in colour, size or shape.
- Left untreated, it can spread to form new cancers around the body.
- Melanoma can appear anywhere on the body, not just areas exposed to UV - on the soles of the feet, under nails or in the eye for example.

The 'ABCDE OF MELANOMA' is a common screening tool used to compare the characteristics of normal moles versus melanoma. These photographs show examples of melanoma and should help you to recognise what is not normal. **However, not all melanoma look like these and some may be very small, so it is important to see your doctor if you notice any new, unusual marks or changes that have lasted more than a few weeks.** It is also important to check your skin regularly (the experts suggest once per month), especially if you are at higher risk of developing skin cancer.

## CONSULT YOUR GP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU DEVELOP ANY OF THESE SIGNS:

- If a mole changes shape, particularly getting an irregular outline.
- If a mole changes colour/getting darker, patchy or multi-shaded.
- If a mole is getting bigger or a new spot, mark or mole is growing quickly.
- If it starts to itch, gets painful, starts bleeding, gets crusty or inflamed.
- Any skin, nail or mucosal (lips and genitalia) lesion that looks or is behaving differently to the rest of your moles / skin lesions.

# THE ABCDE OF MELANOMA RULE:

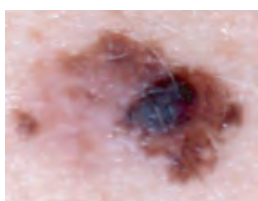
**A = ASYMMETRY:** when one half of the mole doesn't match the other.

**B = BORDER:** when the borders are irregular, ragged or blurred.

**C = COLOUR:** when the colour changes or varies throughout and/or there appears to be no uniform pigmentation.

**D = DIAMETER:** when the diameter is greater than 6mm (could be smaller).

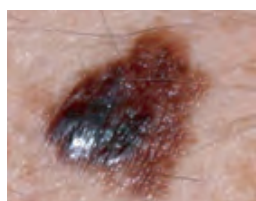
**E = EVOLVING:** changes in the mole over variable time: weeks/months/years.



**A = ASYMMETRY**



**B = BORDER**



**C = COLOUR**



**D = DIAMETER**



**E = EVOLVING**



**NODULAR  
MELANOMA**

## NODULAR MELANOMA AND THE EFG RULE:

- Nodular Melanoma look different to other melanoma.
- Grow quickly, are raised, more even in shape & colour.
- Many are red or pink, some are brown or black.
- They are firm to touch and dome-shaped.
- Nodular melanoma can become quickly invasive - early detection is vital to improve prognosis.

## NODULAR MELANOMA EFG RULE:

**E = Elevated**

**F = Firm to touch**

**G = Growing**



# ABOUT SKCIN AND WHAT WE DO

For further information visit: [skcin.org](http://skcin.org)

**RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH EDUCATION,  
TO PREVENT SKIN CANCER AND PROMOTE EARLY  
DETECTION, TO IMPROVE PROGNOSIS AND SAVE LIVES.**



## OUR MISSION

**TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE  
EDUCATIONAL INTER-  
VENTION INITIATIVES  
TO RAISE AWARENESS,  
INCREASE KNOWLEDGE  
AND SAVE LIVES**

With around 86% of all skin cancer cases preventable, Skcin firmly believe that in order to reverse the soaring rates of skin cancer in the UK, education on a national level is paramount. By raising awareness nationally and by targeting key 'high risk' and 'influential' groups via bespoke initiatives, we can fill the mammoth void that exists in this arena and save lives. Skcin are the UK's leading provider of educational intervention resources. Our mission - to build a brighter, sun safe, skin cancer free future, for our future generations and those to come.

**To donate and help us in our mission, please see reverse for details.**





# SUN SAFE SCHOOLS

## NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME

[sunsafeschools.co.uk](https://sunsafeschools.co.uk) | [sunsafenurseries.co.uk](https://sunsafenurseries.co.uk)

ASSISTING PRIMARY & PRE-SCHOOLS IN THEIR DUTY OF CARE  
AND EDUCATING CHILDREN ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SUN  
SAFETY TO INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR AND PREVENT SKIN CANCER.



Developed by Skcin, the Sun Safe Schools and Sun Safe Nurseries, national accreditation programmes are the UK's most comprehensive **FREE** resources to assist primary and pre-schools in; creating a suitable sun safety policy, communicating with parents to gain support and raise awareness of prevention and early detection within the wider school community and educating pupils on the importance of sun safety, to influence behaviour and ultimately, save lives.

Is your child's primary school or pre-school Sun Safe?

Get your school on-board at: [sunsafeschools.co.uk](https://sunsafeschools.co.uk) | [sunsafenurseries.co.uk](https://sunsafenurseries.co.uk)



# SUN SAFE WORKPLACES

[sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk](http://sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk)

ASSISTING EMPLOYERS IN THEIR DUTY OF CARE TO  
PROTECT AND EDUCATE THEIR OUTDOOR WORKERS.



Workplaces are advised to recognise that sunlight exposure is an occupational hazard for people working outdoors and to implement a policy to meet their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Developed by Skcin, the Sun Safe Workplaces national accreditation programme is the UK's most comprehensive resource providing employers of outdoor workers with; extensive advice and guidance on the implementation of a successful sun safety policy and effective resources to educate their outdoor workers on the importance of skin cancer prevention, early detection and checking their skin regularly for signs of change.

**To get on-board or learn more visit: [sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk](http://sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk)**



# MASCED-TRAINING EYES TO SAVE LIVES

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Early Detection

NATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROGRAMMES FOR  
HAIR & BEAUTY PROFESSIONALS AND HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS



## OUR MISSION

TO PROMOTE THE  
EARLY DETECTION OF  
SKIN CANCER AND  
MELANOMA, TO IMPROVE  
PROGNOSIS AND  
TO SAVE LIVES

The MASCED (Melanoma and Skin Cancer **Early Detection**) national accreditation programme has been developed by Skcin to educate hair and beauty industry professionals as well as medical and healthcare practitioners on the detection of suspicious lesions that may be observed on their client's/patient's skin. The key objectives of the programme are to; increase knowledge of the early signs and symptoms of skin cancer, promote the early detection of melanoma to improve prognosis and save lives, and to raise awareness of the importance of sun safety, aiding the prevention of around 86% of all skin cancer cases. **To get on-board or learn more visit: MASCED.UK | PRO.MASCED.UK**



# PLEASE DONATE

Have you found this booklet a useful source of information?

Would you like to support Skcin in our mission to prevent over 86% of all skin cancer cases and raise awareness of early detection to save lives?

As a charity who relies solely on donations, fundraising and corporate support, every penny counts. Your donations are hugely appreciated and help Skcin develop, produce, print and distribute, life-saving information on the prevention and early detection of skin cancer and continue our pioneering work in educational intervention across the UK. Together we can build a sun safe, skin cancer free future, for our future generation and those to come.

**Together, we can make a difference and save lives.**

## WAYS TO DONATE TO SKCIN:

- Set up a fundraising page and/or donate any amount securely, on-line at: [www.justgiving.com/skcin](http://www.justgiving.com/skcin)
- Send a cheque made payable to 'SKCIN' to: Skcin, 1a Mabel Grove, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5GT
- Visit: [www.skcin.org](http://www.skcin.org) for further information. Thank you.



**THE DAVID PRICE  
MELANOMA TRUST**

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