

# The UV Index

Source: World Health Organization, Global Solar UV Index and Environment Canada

 <p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>LOW</b> Minimal sun protection required.</p>	 <p><b>2</b></p>	 <p><b>3</b></p>	 <p><b>4</b></p>	 <p><b>5</b></p>	 <p><b>6</b></p>	 <p><b>7</b></p>	 <p><b>8</b></p>	 <p><b>9</b></p>	 <p><b>10</b></p>	 <p><b>11+</b></p> <p><b>EXTREME</b> Extra precautions required. Avoid the sun between 11 am and 3 pm and take full sun safety precautions when outdoors.</p>
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# Sun safe play everyday! It just make sense!

## Participation and play with sun safety

There are a variety of activities, games and fun sun experiments available for you to weave into your programs. Visit: [www.cdha.nshealth.ca/SunSafeRecreation](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/SunSafeRecreation) for ideas like these:

### Sun Smart Relay

Organize a dress-up relay using a long-sleeved shirt, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Find a shady spot outside for this activity!

### Science Fun

Have the children pair up and go outside in the morning. Each child marks their partner's shadow with chalk. Repeat at noon and in the afternoon. Explain that when your shadow is shorter, the sun is stronger by teaching them this poem:

*When your shadow is short, Stay out of the sun  
When your shadow is tall, Go out and have fun!*

Activities used with permission from Canadian Cancer Society and SunSmart Program, The Cancer Council Victoria

## Sun safety and communication with caregivers

Communication is key to healthy relationships. Keeping the lines of communication open about sun safety can strengthen the relationship between program staff and caregivers.

- Include sun safety information and tips in newsletters or brochures.
- Distribute and post a checklist of what each child needs to bring and do to have sun safety success.
- Give caregivers a sun safety evaluation to gather their feedback and suggestions for the program.
- Let caregivers know sun safety is very important – you care about their child and want to wisely manage the risks of the sun.
- If there is a policy already in place – communicate this with caregivers.
- When children demonstrate strong sun safety behaviour, celebrate this success with their caregivers.



To access these resources and to learn more about Sun Safety contact:  
Sun Safe Nova Scotia c/o Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program  
1276 South Park Street, Halifax, NS, Canada B3H 2Y9  
Toll Free: 1-866-599-2267  
Email: [cancercareinfo@nshealth.ca](mailto:cancercareinfo@nshealth.ca)  
[www.cdha.nshealth.ca/SunSafeRecreation](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/SunSafeRecreation)

As caring adults, providing high quality opportunities for children in recreation and sport settings, it is critical to create environments that are safe – emotionally and physically.



## What is the connection with safety and the sun?

- Research shows that over 50% of Canadian children get their worst sunburn while watching or participating in outdoor recreational activities.

Source: National Sun Survey Highlights Report (July 2008)

- Compared to young children, older children (ages 6-12) not only spend more time in the sun but are also less likely to be protected from the sun.

Source: National Sun Survey Highlights Report (July 2008)

- People who experience several blistering sunburns during childhood have an increased risk of developing skin cancer.

Source: Canadian Cancer Society

There is definitely room for improvement...but the good news is that you have the opportunity to **influence positive and lasting sun safe behaviours** with program participants! This is just one more way that you can support healthy child development.

We now understand why sun safe environments are very important to quality programs and activities.

## How do we make it happen?

### Lead by Example

Slip on sun safe clothing and sunglasses, slap on a hat and slop on sunscreen (SPF 30+)

### Plan Ahead

Provide an extra supply of sunscreen, sunglasses, shade umbrellas, water, etc. on-site for those participants who forget.

### Post the UV Index

Post the daily UV Index in a prominent spot each morning as a reminder for caregivers, participants and staff. Encourage participation by having a different child each day post the daily UV Index. Listen to the radio or visit a weather channel or website to obtain this information.

### Seek Shade

When the UV Index is moderate or high, program outside activities before 11 am and after 3pm. In Recreation and Sport that isn't always possible – so be smart and manage the risk by seeking or creating shade and covering up!

### Celebrate Sun Safety Success

Create certificates, organize weekly draws or have a Sun Safety Super Star of the week!

### Play

Connect sun safety and play by incorporating Sun Sense Games into your activity plans. This will reinforce what you talk about with participants.

### Policy

Review your Department's Sun Safety Policy. No policy yet? Speak with your supervisor about continuing to improve Sun Safety procedures and practices within your programs.

## Sun safety tips and techniques

### Choose a hat...

- That provides shade to the head, face, back of neck and ears.
- Fits properly.
- Stays on during outdoor play.
- Allows air flow and is cool.
- Has tightly woven fabric as this allows less UV radiation to pass through.



### Tips about Clothing

Consider the following when covering up:

#### Fabrics with a tight weave

- Fabrics that are tightly woven allow less UV rays to pass through to the skin.

#### Lightweight materials

- Fabrics such as linen, cotton, cotton/polyester and hemp offer protection while keeping you cool.

#### Choose darker coloured items

- Most dyes absorb UV rays. The darker the colour the more UV radiation is absorbed.

#### Condition matters

- Clothing that has been stretched or is threadbare offers less UV protection due to gaps in the weave.
- When a piece of clothing becomes wet it loses up to 50% of its protective ability.

### Tips for Using Sunscreen

- Use a water resistant sunscreen with SPF of 30 or higher that blocks UVA and UVB rays.
- Apply sunscreen generously and as directed.
- Reapply sunscreen regularly, especially after swimming or sweating, as this helps to provide continued protection.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent can be used safely at the same time – apply sunscreen first.
- Use sunscreen when the UV index is 3 or higher, even on cloudy days.
- Use lip balm with SPF 30 or higher and reapply when needed.

### Tips for Seeking out Shade

- Seek out trees, gazebos and tall buildings which provide shade for activities.
- Trees with a large dense canopy can provide good shade from midday sun.
- When there is no naturally occurring shade, use umbrellas and tents to make shade.



Source: Canadian Cancer Society and Canadian Dermatology Association