

# THE UV INDEX

Check it every day from April to September



## About the UV Index

- It tells us how strong UV levels are on a given day
- Levels range from 1 to 11+
- The higher the reading the greater the risk of skin and eye damage and the less time it takes skin to burn
- If the UV index is 3 or more you need to protect your skin with the SunSmart code

Check the UV Index on [www.cancer.ie/uvindex](http://www.cancer.ie/uvindex)

For more information:  
Go to [www.cancer.ie/sunsmart](http://www.cancer.ie/sunsmart)



Call our Cancer Nurseline on  
Freephone 1800 200 700  
Order our SunSmart literature on  
[www.cancer.ie/publications/order](http://www.cancer.ie/publications/order)

Published by the Irish Cancer Society 2016©  
Irish Cancer Society, 2016. Next revise 2018

## Be Smart, Be SunSmart



 Irish Cancer Society

 **SunSmart**  
save your skin

# SUNSMART CODE

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with over 10,000 new cases diagnosed in this country in 2013. Most cases are caused by UV rays from the sun and could be prevented by following the SunSmart code.

Sunbeds are linked to the most serious type of skin cancer. Avoid their use to reduce your risk.

Skin cancer affects all age groups and is the most common cancer in 15-44 year olds. Everyone who spends time outdoors is at risk, not just those who sunbathe. This includes people who spend lots of time working or playing outdoors.

## Some facts about UV radiation and your skin

- In general UV rays are strong enough in this country from April to September to increase skin cancer risk.
- You can't see or feel the rays that cause the damage so even on cloudy and cool days follow the SunSmart code.
- Tanned skin is not a sign of good health. It is your skin trying to protect itself from more UV damage.
- Never let skin burn as it increases the risk of melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer.
- Skin doesn't have to peel or be raw to be sunburnt; just going red from the sun is sunburn.

There are four parts to the SunSmart code. Using as many of them as you can when out and about will give young and old the best protection.

### 1. Seek shade...

- Especially from 11-3pm when UV rays are generally at their strongest.
- The deeper the shade the better.



### 2. Cover up...

- With clothes that don't allow light through.
- With a hat that shades the face, ears and back of neck.



### 3. Wear sunglasses...

- This means children too, when they are old enough.
- Wraparound ones are best.
- Make sure they give UV protection.



### 4. Wear sunscreen...

- With SPF 15 or higher (SPF 30+ for children).
- Look for the UVA logo on the bottle.
- Apply it 20 minutes before going outside.
- Reapply every two hours and more often if sweating or towel drying.
- Use a water resistant type if sweating or doing water sports.



**No sunscreen gives 100% protection from UV rays. It needs to be used with the other parts of the SunSmart code**

#### SunSmart kids – why bother?

Children's skin is very sensitive to UV rays and they spend more time outdoors than adults. For this reason it is important to:

- Keep babies under 6 months in the shade
- Keep older children safe with the SunSmart code, even if they tan easily

Be a SunSmart role model and help children learn healthy skin protection habits that will stand to them throughout life and reduce their risk of skin cancer.

