

# SUN SAFETY

## AND SKIN CANCER

1 in 5 will develop skin cancer.  
Protect your skin daily and  
check your skin monthly.

**Prevention and early  
detection, saves lives.**

This booklet has been produced by  
Skin Cancer UK Charity, SKCIN:  
Registered Charity No: 1150048  
For further information visit: [skcin.org](http://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, CUMULATIVE AND CAN BECOME LIFE-THREATENING.

- Non-melanoma skin cancer is the UK's most common cancer, with over 260,000 cases diagnosed annually, affecting 1 in 5 of the UK population.
- Over the last twenty-five years, rates of melanoma (the deadliest form of skin cancer) have risen faster than any other common cancer in Britain.
- According to Cancer Research UK, 1 in 35 men and 1 in 41 women will be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer in their lifetime and it is now one of the biggest killing cancers in young adults (aged 15-34).
- **AROUND 90% OF ALL SKIN CANCERS ARE CAUSED BY DAMAGE FROM UVR, 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 COVER, BOUNCE OFF REFLECTIVE SURFACES AND IS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF SKIN CANCER.

**UVB** rays reach the outer layer of the skin, (the epidermis) they are known as 'burning rays' and are the primary cause of sunburn and skin cancer.


**UVA** rays penetrate the middle layer of the skin, (the dermis) they contribute to skin damage and skin cancer and are also responsible for around 80% of the visible signs of ageing.

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, 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

UVA AND UVB CAUSE CUMULATIVE AND IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO THE SKIN CELLS WHICH CAN LEAD TO SKIN CANCER.



# SUNBURN THE FACTS

SUNBURN IS BAD NEWS AT ANY AGE AND THE DANGERS GO WAY BEYOND THE SHORT-TERM PAIN, SWELLING AND REDNESS. SUNBURN, PARTICULARLY IN CHILDHOOD OR ADOLESCENCE IS STRONGLY LINKED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MELANOMA IN LATER LIFE.

Even a single sunburn, can significantly increase a person's risk of developing melanoma. Skin damage builds up over time starting with your very first sunburn - the more you burn, the greater your risk. This is because when the skin absorbs UV radiation, it can damage the genetic material in the skin cells, causing them to mutate, grow out-of-control and develop skin cancer.

Sunburn, reddening, peeling and even tanning of the skin is clear indication of sun damage. The simple fact is, when our skin changes colour it is a visual warning sign that tells us our body is working hard to defend itself from the harmful effects of the sun.

## WARNING

WHEN IT COMES TO  
UV EXPOSURE THE  
MESSAGE IS CLEAR -  
THERE IS NO SAFE WAY  
TO GET A TAN!



# 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'S RISK OF DEVELOPING DIFFERENT KINDS OF SKIN CANCER, INCLUDING THE MOST SERIOUS FORM MELANOMA.

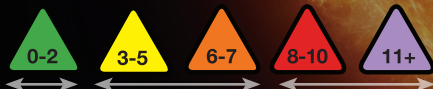
There is so much evidence to support this, that the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified sunbeds as a Group 1 carcinogen. This is its highest cancer risk category. Reports further conclude that the risk of skin cancer is significantly higher when exposure takes place at a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

Sunbeds use fluorescent bulbs that emit particularly high levels of UVA radiation at much greater intensities than natural sunlight to enable the skin to tan quickly. UVA radiation penetrates deep into the layers of the skin, significantly increasing the risk of cell damage and skin cancer. Once the tan fades the damage remains, which can result in very serious consequences over time.

## WARNING

IN SOME COUNTRIES  
SUNBEDS ARE BANNED!  
IN THE UK, IT IS ILLEGAL  
TO USE SUNBEDS IF  
YOU ARE UNDER  
THE AGE OF 18.

# CHECKING THE UV INDEX



LOW UV LEVELS  
AND RISK OF  
SUN DAMAGE

MODERATE TO HIGH  
UV LEVELS AND  
RISK OF SUN DAMAGE

VERY HIGH TO EXTREME  
UV LEVELS AND  
RISK OF SUN DAMAGE

THE SKCIN APP GIVES YOU  
INSTANT ACCESS TO THE  
UV INDEX FORECAST

- 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 be efficiently and sufficiently produced in around 10-20 minutes of sun exposure per day, from doses of UV below which cause reddening or burning of the skin.

## THE SKCIN APP

GET THE CURRENT  
UV INDEX AND TWO DAY  
HOURLY FORECAST  
WITH SUN PROTECTION  
ADVICE AND HANDY  
NOTIFICATIONS!



# SKCIN'S 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 outdoors without adequate protection. If you regularly take part in outdoor hobbies or sports – or if you work outdoors, you are at greater risk. To protect your skin, use the following 'Five S' approach to 5 star sun protection in combination to reduce your risk of skin cancer.

1. **SLIP** on clothing - your first line of defence!
2. **SLOP** on SPF 30+, 4 or 5 star UVA sunscreen
3. **SLAP** on a wide brimmed hat
4. **SLIDE** on UV protective sunglasses
5. **SHADE** from the sun during peak UV hours

*See overleaf for further detailed guidance.*

## PREVENTION

AROUND 90% OF ALL SKIN  
CANCERS ARE CAUSED BY  
UV RADIATION.  
PROTECT YOUR SKIN -  
PREVENTION IS BETTER  
THAN CURE!



## 1: SLIP on clothing - your first line of defence

---

- 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 the best protection.

## 2: SLOP on SPF 30+ sunscreen

---

- No sunscreen provides complete protection.
- Never rely on sunscreen alone to protect your 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 (ideally rated 4 or 5 stars).
- 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 again once out to ensure adequate and even coverage.
- Regardless of the instructions all sunscreens should be reapplied AT LEAST every 2 hours (more often if perspiring) and always straight after swimming.
- Protect your lips with an SPF 30+ lip balm.

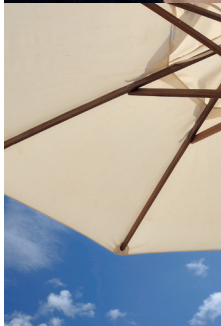


## 3: SLAP on a wide brimmed hat

---

- Wear a wide brimmed hat to protect the scalp and shade the face, neck, ears, cheeks and eyes.
- A close weave or UPF rated fabric provides best protection.
- Be aware that baseball caps do not provide adequate shade and extra measures should be taken to protect the back of the neck, ears and face.





## THE SKCIN APP

Get rationale and advice regarding your personal level of risk for the development of skin cancer based on a series of specific questions.

## 4: SLIDE on quality sunglasses

---

- Solar UV radiation can be damaging to the eyes.
- Wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays, these should be marked with a rating CE UV400 or higher.
- Some sunglasses are labelled with an Eye Protection Factor (EPF) which ranges from 1-10. Those that carry an EPF of 9 or 10 provide excellent protection.
- Ensure your sunglasses are close fitting.
- A wrap around design will help prevent 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

---

- Shade can provide a good barrier from UV rays.
- Seek shade whenever possible, particularly during peak UV hours (between 11am and 3pm).
- Keep toddlers in the shade as much as possible 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?

---

All skin types can get skin cancer, however, those at greater risk tend to fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Fairer skin types that burn more easily
- Lots of moles and/or freckles
- A history of sunburn (particularly in childhood)
- A history of tanning and/or sunbed use
- Outdoor workers or sports enthusiasts
- A family history of skin cancer / melanoma

# CHILDREN AND BABIES

A CHILD'S DELICATE SKIN IS HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO SUN DAMAGE. JUST ONE BLISTERING SUNBURN IN CHILDHOOD OR ADOLESCENCE MORE THAN DOUBLES A PERSON'S CHANCE OF DEVELOPING MELANOMA IN LATER LIFE.

- Cover children up with as much clothing as possible including a wide brimmed hat. UPF rated fabrics will provide optimum protection.
- Use a minimum SPF 30 sunscreen with 4 or 5 star UVA protection specifically formulated for children/babies.
- Apply liberally and evenly, ensuring good coverage.
- Apply 20 minutes before heading outdoors and reapply again once out to ensure adequate coverage.
- Reapply AT LEAST every 2 hours and immediately after swimming / towelling.
- Keep toddlers in the shade as much as possible and babies in the shade at all times!
- **Don't forget to ensure they are protected during school / pre-school hours and have access to sunscreen and a sun hat for use and reapplication throughout the day.**





# SKIN CANCER IN SKIN OF COLOUR

IT IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION THAT PEOPLE WITH DARKER SKIN TONES ARE IMMUNE TO SKIN CANCER. INDIVIDUALS OF ALL SKIN TYPES CAN DEVELOP SKIN CANCER AND SHOULD CHECK THEIR SKIN MONTHLY FOR SIGNS OF CHANGE.

The term 'skin of colour' refers to diverse skin colours which includes people of Asian, African, Latino, Middle Eastern and Native American descent. Whilst melanoma is less common in people with these skin types, it is unfortunately often associated with greater morbidity and mortality because of the misconception that they are immune and the early signs and symptoms are often more difficult to detect.

The most common places for melanoma to develop in black skin is in less pigmented areas such as: the palms of the hands, soles of the feet and under the nails, the anogenital region (the area around the groin and anus) and the mucous membranes (tissues that line body cavities or canals, such as inside the mouth).

## WARNING

PEOPLE OF ALL SKIN  
TYPES CAN DEVELOP  
BOTH MELANOMA AND  
NON-MELANOMA  
SKIN CANCER.



# CHECKING YOUR SKIN

THE SOONER SKIN CANCER IS IDENTIFIED AND TREATED, THE BETTER YOUR CHANCE OF AVOIDING SURGERY OR IN THE CASE OF MELANOMA, POTENTIAL DISFIGUREMENT OR EVEN DEATH. IF DETECTED AND TREATED EARLY, ALMOST ALL SKIN CANCERS, INCLUDING MELANOMA, ARE CURABLE.

- Skin cancer seldom hurts and is much more frequently seen than felt.
- All skin types should check their skin thoroughly, once a month for the early warning signs.
- 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 - from the top of your head to the soles of your feet, including under your nails.
- Get to know your skin and every lump, bump, mole, freckle and mark - so that you feel confident in identifying any changes.
- If you spot anything **NEW, UNUSUAL** or **CHANGING**, seek immediate advice from your GP or dermatologist.

## EARLY DETECTION

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

# NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCER

NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCER IS THE MOST COMMONLY  
DIAGNOSED CANCER IN THE UK AND WORLDWIDE.



## BASAL CELL CARCINOMA (BCC)

- The most common type of non-melanoma skin cancer.
- The majority occur on sun exposed areas such as the face, neck and ears.
- Can appear in different shapes and sizes, are slow growing and rarely spread.
- Look out for pearly, shiny lumps, a 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 (SCC)

- The majority occur on sun exposed areas such as the face, ears, lips, hands.
- Can present with varied appearance and grow at variable rates.
- Look for a hard, scaly, white or skin coloured lump, nodule or non-healing sore.
- SCC rarely spreads, but in extreme cases can become life-threatening.

# DETECTING MELANOMA



- Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer.
- Melanoma most commonly appear as a new mole (70%), or within an existing mole or freckle that changes in shape, size and/or colour.
- 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 to help you recognise abnormalities. **However, not all melanoma look like these, only 70% follow the ABCDE rule and some may be very small - so it is very 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 (once a month) for the early warning signs, 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 or freckle changes shape, particularly getting an irregular outline.
- If it changes colour/gets darker, becomes patchy or multi-shaded.
- If it gets 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:

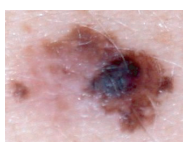
**A = ASYMMETRY:** when one half of the mole doesn't match the other.

**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).

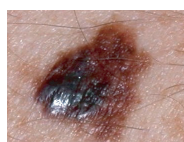
**E = EVOLVING:** any changes to a mole's appearance or sensation.



**A = ASYMMETRY**



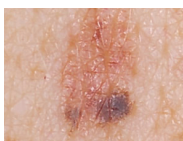
**B = BORDER**



**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 black or red, but can be brown or pink.
- 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**



# LEARN MORE TAKE CHARGE

To learn more and take charge of your skin health - install the Skcin app at: [app.skcin.org](http://app.skcin.org)

The Skcin app is a comprehensive, educational and self-management tool developed to educate, empower and equip the nation in taking charge of their skin health and surveillance.

To install the app, go to: [app.skcin.org](http://app.skcin.org)

*(using the Safari web browser on iOS devices or Chrome on Android)*

Tap 'Install' and 'Add to Home screen'.



## PREVENTION | FREE

Learn all about ultraviolet radiation, how it affects your skin, how to take charge of your family's skin health and prevent skin cancer by adopting simple sun safe strategies.



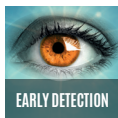
## UV INDEX FORECAST | FREE TRIAL Optional in-app purchase 42p pm charged at £4.99 pa

Get the current and daily peak UV index, 2 day hourly forecast and set alerts to know when the UVI reaches 3, when it reaches it's daily peak and set 2 hourly sunscreen reminders.



## RISK ASSESSOR | FREE

Get rationale and advice with regards to your personal level of risk for the development of skin cancer and create multiple risk assessments for family members.



## EARLY DETECTION | FREE

Learn about the various forms of pre-cancerous skin lesions, non-melanoma and melanoma skin cancers with images and detailed guidance on how to spot the early warning signs.



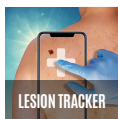
## SKIN CHECKING | FREE

Your five-step guide to conducting thorough, full-body self examinations with the ability to set monthly reminders for when your next examinations are due.



## EARLY DIAGNOSIS | FREE

Learn how to take action with concerns and ensure you receive appropriate action from your GP, in addition to overviews on diagnosis, staging and treatment.



## LESION TRACKER | FREE TRIAL Optional in-app purchase 99p pm charged at £11.88 pa

Track, compare and manage lesions using close-up photography and a comprehensive assessment and signposting service to help you take charge of concerns.

# ABOUT SKCIN AND OUR MISSION

Skcin is a specialist skin cancer charity founded in 2006 in memory of Karen Clifford (represented by the 'KC' in our name). Our key objective is to raise awareness of skin cancer prevention and early detection through educational intervention for public benefit.

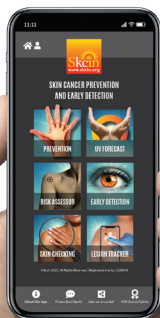
   FOLLOW US @SkcinCharity



Through the continual development of unique, sustainable and nationally accessible intervention initiatives—our mission is to reach as many people as possible with vital education,

to drive awareness and behavioural change, and empower the nation to take charge of their skin health and surveillance.

Our vision is to save lives and combat rising statistics head on by preventing skin cancer for our future generations, improving patient outcomes through early diagnosis and relieving the significant burden on our NHS.





# COMBATting SKIN CANCER NATIONWIDE

Skcin operate five national accreditation programmes that target key, high-risk and influential, public and private sectors with bespoke educational intervention - designed to infiltrate communities nationwide.

## OUR ACCREDITATION PROGRAMMES:

**SUN SAFE SCHOOLS AND SUN SAFE NURSERIES:** Two independent, national accreditation programmes providing primary and pre-school settings with comprehensive free resources to assist them in their duty of care to safeguard children against over-exposure to UV radiation and prevent skin cancer through education.

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

**SUN SAFE WORKPLACES:** A national accreditation programme providing employers of outdoor workers and HSRs with everything they need to confidently address UV exposure in the workplace - and fulfil their duty of care to prevent occupational skin cancer and promote early detection and diagnosis.

**Visit:** [sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk](https://sunsafeworkplaces.co.uk)

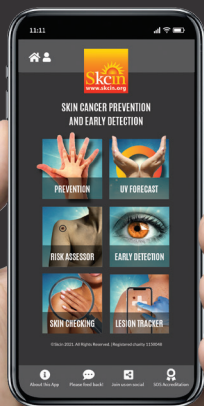
**MASCED AND MASCED PRO TRAINING PROGRAMMES:** Two independent accreditation programmes that are 'training eyes to save lives' across hair, beauty and healthcare professions nationwide.

**Visit:** [masced.uk](https://masced.uk) | [pro.masced.uk](https://pro.masced.uk)

# LEARN MORE AND TAKE CHARGE WITH THE SKCIN APP

A comprehensive, educational and self-management tool, empowering individuals of all skin types to take charge of their skin health and surveillance.

Simply go to: [app.skcin.org](http://app.skcin.org) and follow the on-screen instructions to install the app on your mobile device.



See inside for  
further information

**For further information, tools and resources dedicated to the prevention and early detection of skin cancer visit: [skcin.org](http://skcin.org)**



Join our community @SkcinCharity

This booklet is produced using paper that has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

