



FOR **EVERYONE** UNDER THE SUN



Skin Cancer

Skin cancer* is the most common type of cancer in Ireland and in fair/light skinned populations worldwide, for whom sunburn is a risk factor. The vast majority of these cancers are associated with overexposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV), mainly from sunlight. However, UV from artificial sources e.g. sunbeds, also cause skin cancer.

Yet, the good news is that most skin cancers can be prevented. A person's risk is mainly influenced by exposure to UV, and skin pigmentation.

Know your skin type! The effects of sunlight are not the same for everyone

A person's natural skin colour influences their sensitivity to UV and skin cancer risk, and can be classified on a scale – the Fitzpatrick Skin Type Classification Scale, which ranges from 1 (high risk) to 6 (low risk). It considers skin colour (i.e. pale white to black), and how the skin reacts to sunlight (i.e. whether it burns easily, or tans).

Most people living in Ireland have fair skin – Fitzpatrick skin type 1 or 2. People with these skin types burn easily and tan poorly so are particularly vulnerable to UV damage and, as a result, are at a higher risk of skin cancer.

THE FITZPATRICK SKIN TYPE CLASSIFICATION



Reduce your risk: protect & inspect

You can reduce your risk of skin cancer by avoiding overexposure to UV from sunlight or artificial sources (never ever use a sunbed). If you are concerned about a change or growth on your skin, you should always see your doctor.

* Skin cancer is the abnormal, uncontrolled growth of skin cells. Skin cancers are generally divided into non-melanoma skin cancers (which include basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma), and melanoma.

What is solar UV?

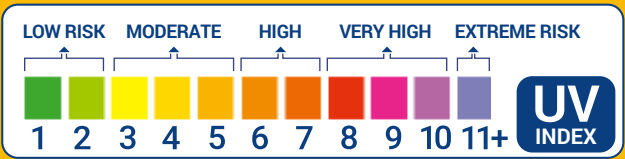
UV is a part of sunlight. UV rays reaching the Earth are a combination of UVA and UVB.

Overexposure to UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage, premature skin ageing and skin cancer.

UV rays are present all year round but levels vary, depending on things like: your location, time of year, time of day and weather conditions.

What is the UV index?

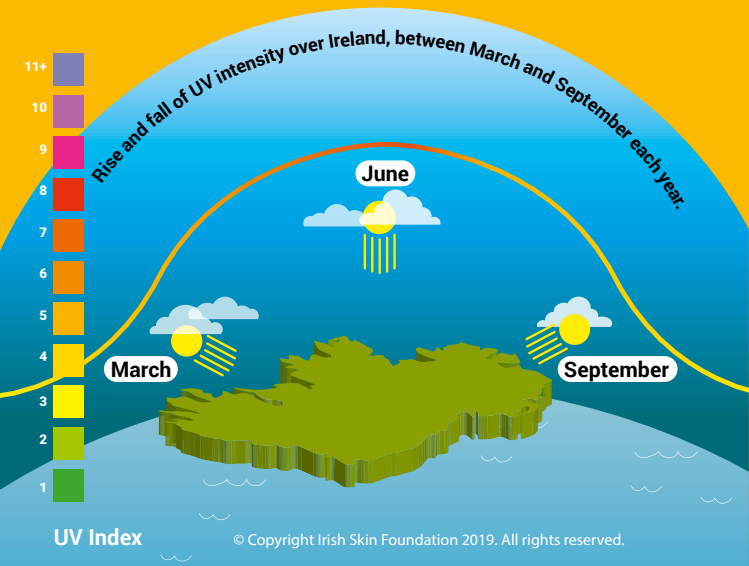
The UV index measures the UV level at the surface of the Earth. It ranges from 0 -11+; the higher the number, the greater the risk of skin damage, particularly sunburn, which is mainly caused by UVB.



Think UV, not heat!

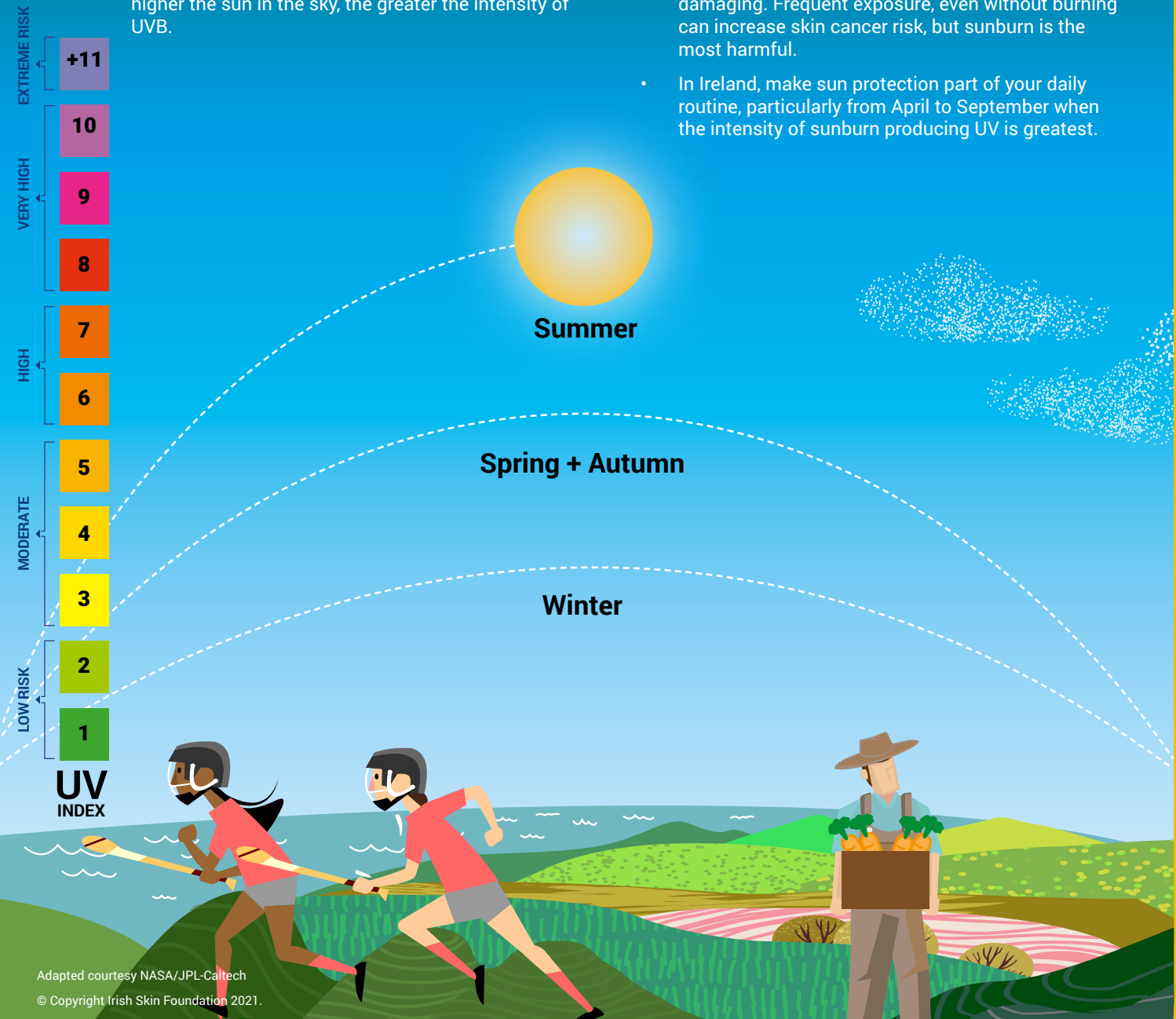
UV cannot be seen or felt so we need to defend ourselves against overexposure. UV damage adds up over our lifetime!

In Ireland, make sun protection part of your daily routine particularly from April - September, when the intensity of sunburn producing UV is greatest.



Seasonal UV changes

- The time of year, time of day and time unprotected outside, all matter to your skin!
- The strength of UVA rays remain relatively consistent during the day, all year round, but UVB fluctuates: the higher the sun in the sky, the greater the intensity of UVB.
- UVA is mostly involved in skin ageing while UVB is mainly responsible for sunburn. However, both types of UV are linked to the development of skin cancer.
- Both occasional and chronic UV exposure can be damaging. Frequent exposure, even without burning can increase skin cancer risk, but sunburn is the most harmful.
- In Ireland, make sun protection part of your daily routine, particularly from April to September when the intensity of sunburn producing UV is greatest.





Protect your skin

Be SunSmart:



Especially from **April - September**, even when it is cloudy! Stay safe by limiting time in the midday sun when UV is strongest, typically between the hours of **11:00am-3:00pm**.

Remember the five 'Ss' of sun safety:

- 1.**  **Seek** shade e.g. sit in cover of trees to avoid direct sunlight and use a sunshade on your buggy or pram. Keep babies and children out of direct sunlight.
- 2.**  **Slip** on clothing: Cover skin as much as possible e.g. wear long sleeves, collared t-shirts, clothes made from close-woven material that does not allow sunlight through.
- 3.**  **Slap** on a hat with a wide brim: Protect your face, ears and neck.
- 4.**  **Slop** on broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30+ for adults and 50+ for children, with high UVA protection, and water resistant. Reapply regularly.
- 5.**  **Slide** on sunglasses with UV protection: Guard your eyes from harm.



Protect your family:

Babies and young children are particularly vulnerable to sun exposure.



Remember:

Do not deliberately suntan.
Avoid sunbathing/sunbathing.
Never ever use a sunbed!



Most people don't apply sunscreen correctly. Here's how it's done:

Correct amount: You should apply at least one teaspoon to each body part.



- Head/face/neck
- Each arm
- Each leg
- Your front
- Your back

Correct locations: Don't forget your ears, your nose, your lips (choose a broad-spectrum lip balm), your neck, the tops of your feet and (if your hair is thinning) your scalp!

Correct timing: Apply sunscreen at least 20-30 minutes before you go out in the sun.

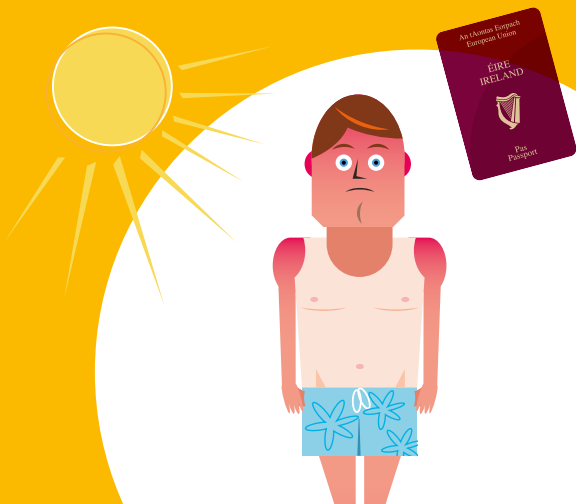
Correct frequency: Reapply frequently, at least every two hours and after exercising, sweating, swimming, or towel drying.

Correct use: No sunscreen can provide 100% UV protection. Broad-spectrum sunscreen should be used alongside other protective measures such as clothing and shade.

Know your medications: Some medicines can increase sensitivity to sunlight.

Remember: No sunbathing and no sunburning.

Home or abroad: Whether at home or abroad, enjoy the sun safely. Be SunSmart!



Visit www.irishskin.ie to read about

- Acne
- Atopic Eczema
- Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS)
- Psoriasis
- Rosacea
- Sun damage and skin cancer
- Information and resources about other skin conditions

You can also

- Ask a dermatology nurse a question
- Sign up for our newsletter
- See our events calendar
- Donate to support our work
- Read about advocacy and research

This leaflet has been prepared by the Irish Skin Foundation (ISF) in consultation with people affected by skin cancer, dermatology nurses and consultant dermatologists.

The prevention of skin cancer caused by natural and artificial UV is the particular emphasis of the ISF's work in the area of skin cancer.

More detailed information see:
www.irishskin.ie/sunsmart/

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& INSPECT[®]
YOUR SKIN**