

# SOLAR ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION

You can get sunburnt on a cloudy day, under the water, and even when skiing!  
Occasional, intense sun exposure and sunburn increases skin cancer risk.

Over **90%** of UV can pass through light cloud

Ultraviolet radiation (UV) is a component of sunlight. UV levels are influenced by many factors including your location, the time of year and time of day.

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

The solar UV index is a measure of the UV level at the Earth's surface and gives an indication of the potential for skin damage. The UV index ranges from zero upwards – the higher the UV index, the greater the risk. When the UV index is 3 or above, you need to protect your skin.

Remember UV damage is cumulative - it adds up over your lifetime.

Clean snow reflects up to **80%** of sunburning UV

Outdoor workers receive **5-10** times more UV exposure than indoor workers

For every 300 metre increase in altitude, UV increases by **4%**

**60%** of UV is received between 10am and 2pm daily



When the UV index is **3+**, you need to protect your skin.

Shade can reduce UV by **50%** or more



White sand reflects up to **15%** of UV

At a half metre depth, UV is still **40%** as intense as at the surface



**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.



**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.



**Slap** on a hat with a wide brim: Protect your face, ears and neck.



**Seek** shade: 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.



**Slide** on sunglasses with UV protection: Guard your eyes from harm.

**PROTECT & INSPECT YOUR SKIN**

More information at [www.irishskin.ie](http://www.irishskin.ie)

Adapted from Global Solar UV Index: A Practical Guide, 2002  
A joint recommendation of: World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection.

Published by the Irish Skin Foundation. First published May 2017; reviewed May 2019 © Copyright Irish Skin Foundation 2019. All rights reserved.

