

# HEALTH AWARENESS



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## SUN SAFETY



**S**un safety is never out of season in Colorado, where sunny days and high altitude increase exposure to the sun's harmful rays. Excessive exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer and premature aging of the skin. Harmful rays from the sun -- and sunlamps and tanning beds -- may also cause eye problems, weaken your immune system, and give you unsightly skin spots and wrinkles, or "leathery" skin. Coloradans get skin cancer at a higher rate than the national average. Every year 21.9 out of 100,000 Coloradans are diagnosed with skin cancer compared to the national average of 19.7 out of 100,000.

Sun damage to the body is caused by invisible ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which reaches us as long wavelengths known as UVA and short wavelengths known as UVB. UVB radiation can cause sunburn. But the longer wavelength UVA is dangerous, too, as it can penetrate the skin and damage tissue at deeper levels. If you have an illness and take medications, ask your doctor about extra sun care precautions because

some drugs may increase sensitivity to the sun.

### REDUCE TIME IN THE SUN

Stay in the shade as much as possible throughout the day. The sun's rays are strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., so limit exposure during this window. Even on an overcast day, up to 80% of the sun's UV rays can get through the clouds.

### DRESS WITH CARE

Wear clothes that protect your body. Cover as much of your body as possible if you plan to be outside on a sunny day. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, long sleeves, and long pants. Sun-protective clothing with built-in SPF is available from clothing manufacturers. However, the FDA does not regulate such products unless the manufacturer intends to make a medical claim, so consider using other precautions such as an umbrella for shade or sunscreen.

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## PROTECT YOUR EYES

Sunlight reflecting off snow, sand, or water increases exposure to UV radiation and your risk of developing eye problems such as cataracts. Long hours on the beach or in the snow without adequate eye protection also can result in a short-term condition known as photokeratitis, or reversible sunburn of the cornea. This painful condition — also known as “snow blindness” — can cause temporary vision loss.

The right sunglasses can protect your eyes.

- When buying sunglasses, look for a label that specifically offers 99%-100% UV protection. This assures that the glasses block both forms of UV radiation.
- Eyewear should be labeled “sunglasses.” Be wary of dark or tinted eyewear sold as fashion accessories that may provide little or no protection from UV or visible light.
- Don’t assume that pricier sunglasses or those with a darker tint offer more UV protection.
- Be sure that your sunglasses don’t distort colors and affect the recognition of traffic signals.
- Ask an eye care professional to test your sunglasses if you’re not sure of their level of UV protection.

## CHECK FOR SKIN CANCER

Check your skin regularly for signs of skin cancer. Look for changes in the size, shape, color, or feel of birthmarks, moles, and spots. If you find any changes or find sores that are not healing, see your doctor. No matter our skin color, we’re all potential victims of sunburn and the other detrimental effects of excessive exposure to UV radiation. 

## BENEFITS CORNER



## UPCOMING CHP ANNUAL RENEWAL MEETING

The CHP Annual Renewal Meeting is on September 15th at 10 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the 2023 rates, benefit plans, and any other important updates from the CHP. This year the meeting is in-person with a virtual Zoom option.

Open enrollment training is still available this fall with your CHP Benefit Administrator. CHP will be providing both virtual and in-person training options to member counties. Please reach out to your CHP Benefit Administrator, if you have not already scheduled training.

Plan documents, including new-hire paperwork, are available online at [www.ctsi.org/chp-documents](http://www.ctsi.org/chp-documents). You will need to log in to access CHP documents; you may sign up or reset your password at [www.ctsi.org](http://www.ctsi.org). Please contact us if you need assistance.

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