



# HEALTH AWARENESS

May 2024

## SUN SAFETY: PROTECTING YOUR SKIN

As the weather warms up and the sun shines brighter, it's crucial to remember the importance of sun safety. While soaking up the sun can feel good, protecting your skin from harmful UV rays is crucial to prevent sunburn, premature aging, and skin cancer. Below are some vital tips to keep you safe while enjoying the sunshine.

**USE SUNSCREEN:** Your first defense against harmful UV rays is sunscreen. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all exposed skin, including your face, neck, ears, and hands. Reapply sunscreen every two hours or more often if you're swimming or sweating.

**SEEK SHADE:** Avoid spending prolonged periods in direct sunlight, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are the strongest. Seek shade under trees, umbrellas, or canopies to lower your risk of sunburn and heat-related illnesses.

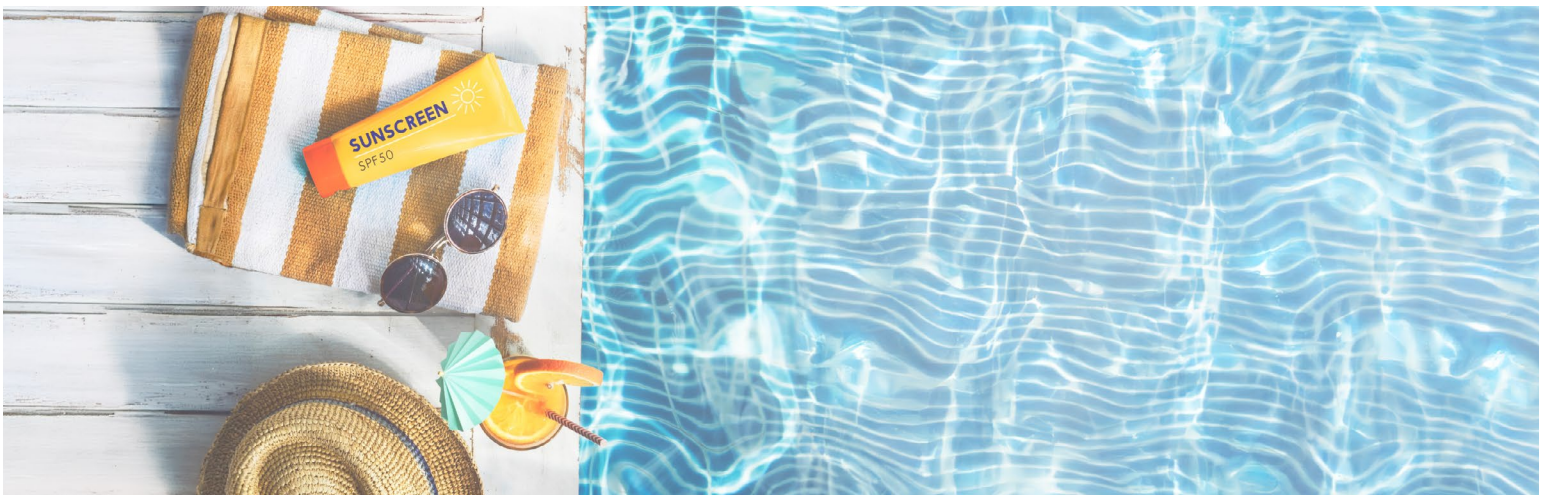
**WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING:** When spending time outdoors, wear lightweight, long-sleeved shirts, pants, and wide-brimmed hats to shield your skin from the sun. Dark-colored, tightly woven fabrics offer the best protection. Remember to protect your eyes with sunglasses that block UV rays.

**STAY HYDRATED:** Drink plenty of water, especially when you're spending time in the sun. Dehydration can occur quickly in hot weather, leading to dizziness, fatigue, and heatstroke. Avoid excessive alcohol and caffeine, as they can contribute to dehydration.

**CHECK THE UV INDEX:** Before heading outdoors, check the UV Index in your area. The index provides important information about the strength of the sun's UV rays and helps you plan your outdoor activities accordingly. If the index is high, take extra precautions to protect your skin.

**BE SMART WITH OVERCAST SKIES:** Remember that sun safety is important, even on cloudy days. UV rays can penetrate clouds and cause skin damage, so don't let overcast skies fool you into a false sense of security. Always apply sunscreen and practice sun safety habits, regardless of the weather.

**PERFORM REGULAR SKIN CHECKS:** Monitor your skin for any changes, including new moles, freckles, or spots. If you notice changes in size, shape, or color or have sores that don't heal, see a dermatologist promptly. Early detection is key to successfully treating skin cancer.



## KNOW YOUR SUNSCREEN

Sunscreens come in many formulations and delivery methods, and finding the one you like best can take trial and error. Whether it's a sports spray, an easy-to-use stick, or a rich moisturizer with antiaging ingredients, the best sunscreen is the one you will use every day.

**SPF, or sun protection factor,** is a measure of a sunscreen's ability to protect your skin from harmful UVB rays. The number indicates how much longer it would take for your skin to redden compared to if you weren't wearing any sunscreen. For instance, if you use an SPF 15 product as directed, it would take you 15 times longer to burn than if you were unprotected.

**Broad spectrum.** When you see the term 'broad spectrum' on a sunscreen label, it means the product contains ingredients that shield from both UVA and UVB rays, providing comprehensive sun protection.

**Water resistance.** While sunscreens can't claim to be waterproof, they can be labeled water resistant for either 40 or 80 minutes. You can burn even when in the water, so reapplying is key!

**Sensitive skin.** Products containing zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, sometimes referred to as mineral or physical formulas, may be less likely to cause skin irritation in people who have sensitive skin.

## LOOK OUT FOR WINDOWS

While glass blocks UVB rays pretty well, it allows UVA rays to pass through. This is true of your windows at home as well as on the road. Car windshields are treated to shield drivers from most UVA rays, but side, back, and sunroof windows usually aren't. When you're in your car, protect yourself and your family with hats, clothing, sunglasses, or sunscreen. Another option is to have UV-protective window film applied to windows in your car and at home. The windows on airplanes, trains, and buses also allow UVA rays to pass through. That's why airline pilots, crew members, and even frequent travelers may get more skin cancers than other people.



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## BENEFITS CORNER

Mental Health Awareness Month, observed every May, aims to raise awareness about mental health and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illnesses.

When you're not feeling well, you can quickly get the support you need using Anthem's LiveHealth Online. Your plan includes benefits for video visits, so you'll just pay your share of the costs. Whether you have a cold, feel anxious, or need help managing your medication, doctors and mental health professionals are ready to help you feel your best.

With LiveHealth Online, you have the power to take control of your health. You can easily schedule a private video visit with a board-certified doctor, psychiatrist, or licensed therapist from your mobile device, tablet, or computer, whether you're at home or on the go. Download the free LiveHealth Online app on your mobile device or tablet, or visit [livehealthonline.com](http://livehealthonline.com).

LiveHealth Online can help you with these types of conditions:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Panic attacks
- Grief
- Relationship & family issues
- Stress from coping with a sickness

In case you have questions about using LiveHealth Online, here are some [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\)](#). As always, CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health coverage. You can reach us at (303) 861-0507.