

## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a hormone that controls calcium levels in your blood. It is needed for healthy bones, muscles and teeth and for general good health. It is made in your body when your skin is exposed to sun (UV radiation).

Some foods such as oily fish and eggs contain small amounts of vitamin D, and margarine and some types of milk have vitamin D added. However it's hard to get enough from food alone.

Only a certain amount of vitamin D can be absorbed by the body at a time. Being in the sun for a longer time doesn't mean more vitamin D, but does mean a higher risk of skin cancer.

### From September to April when UV is usually 3 and above

Sun protection should be used when heading outdoors for more than a few minutes. Most Australians have adequate vitamin D levels just from doing typical day-to-day activities.

A few minutes of mid-morning or mid-afternoon sun exposure to arms and hands on most days of the week should be sufficient to maintain adequate Vitamin D.

### From May to August when UV level is usually below 3

Sun protection is not necessary unless near snow or other reflective surfaces. Spend time outdoors in the middle of the day with some skin uncovered. Being physically active whilst outdoors helps to boost vitamin D levels.

Please see your GP if you are concerned about vitamin D deficiency.



## When is sun protection needed in Tasmania?

### From September to April

For the general population, sun protection is required when UV levels reach 3 and above which usually occurs from the beginning of September through to the end of April. This means using a combinations of sun protection such as hats, clothing, shade, sunscreen and sunglasses between these months.

### From May to August

When average UV levels are below 3, sun protection is not recommended during these months unless in alpine regions, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outdoors for extended periods.

Those who work outdoors require year-round sun protection as they receive greater amounts of UV.

For more information visit [www.cancertas.org.au/healthyliving/sunmart](http://www.cancertas.org.au/healthyliving/sunmart)

### Get in touch today

Call Cancer Council Tasmania on **1300 65 65 85**

Visit [www.cancertas.org.au](http://www.cancertas.org.au)

You can also speak to your doctor, community health worker or child health nurse.



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## Being SunSmart in Tasmania



Need more information?



## Being SunSmart

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is a major cause of skin cancer but it is also the best natural source of Vitamin D.

When the UV is 3 and above take these five steps to protect against skin damage:

**Slip** on sun protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Long pants and shirts with a collar and long sleeves are best. Choose lightweight, closely woven material with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 50+.

**Slop** on SPF 30+ (or greater) sunscreen that's broad spectrum and water resistant. Apply generously to clean dry skin 20 minutes before you go outside and re-apply every two hours (and apply more often when swimming or sweating). Sunscreen should be your last line of defence. Check the expiry date.

**Slap** on a hat that shades your face, neck and ears. Broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats are best.



### Seek shade

Staying in the shade is one of the best ways to reduce sun exposure. Make sure trees, shade structures or portable shade casts a dark shadow.

### Slide on sunglasses

Close fitting, wraparound style sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZ 1067:2003 - category 2, 3 or 4) are best.



## Skin cancer

Skin cancer forms when skin cells are damaged by UV radiation penetrating the skin. All types of sunburn, serious or mild, can cause permanent skin damage and can lay the groundwork for skin cancer to develop later in life.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. At least two in three Australians will develop skin cancer before the age of 70.

Both tanning and sunburn increase your risk of skin cancer.

## UV, not heat, is what to beat

UV radiation comes directly from the sun.

It can damage skin even on cool, cloudy days as it can pass through light cloud and is not fully filtered out by heavy cloud.

UV radiation can be scattered in the air and reflected by buildings, concrete, sand, snow and water.

UV levels are highest during the middle of the day.

When the UV Index is forecast to be 3 or above the SunSmart UV Alert with sun protection times is issued for that day.

Check the daily sun protection times:

- on the free SunSmart app
- online at [www.cancertas.org.au](http://www.cancertas.org.au),
- [www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv](http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv) or
- [www.myuv.com.au](http://www.myuv.com.au)
- in the weather section of newspapers.

