

Sun Protection and Self-Examination

Skin cancer diagnoses are increasing greatly in Sweden. To reduce your risk of developing skin tumours or precursors to skin tumours, you should protect yourself from the sun. Using sunscreen regularly protects against squamous cell carcinoma in the skin and related, precancerous conditions. It also protects you from sunburn, which can lead to a type of skin tumour called malignant melanoma.

Facts about the sun

- Sunlight contains ultraviolet radiation, which is the main cause of skin cancer.
- It is especially important to protect children from the sun.
- Snow, water and sand reflect the sun's ultraviolet rays, thereby increasing the risk of sunburn.
- Ultraviolet light passes through clouds and water and can therefore cause sunburn even on a cloudy day, e.g., when swimming outdoors.
- Tanning in a solarium is also harmful to your skin and speeds up its ageing process. A tan developed in a solarium offers no protection against the sun's harmful effects.
- The sun's UV radiation is strongest between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- The sun's rays are more powerful on high mountains and in countries close to the equator.
- Sunlight helps the body to produce vitamin D.

Sun protection

- Be especially careful during the middle of the day (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.) when the sun's UV radiation is strongest.
- You can be outdoors in the sunshine without protection for a maximum of 15–30 minutes per day. This is enough time to achieve maximal vitamin-D production.
- You should preferably wear clothes made from tightly woven fabric and a hat.
- Stay in the shade when possible.
- Protect any body parts not covered by clothing by applying sunscreen.
- Your sunscreen should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of **at least** 30 and be pleasant to use. Look for the symbols "SPF 30–50+" and the letters "UVA" inside a circle on the packaging of any sunscreen you use.
- Apply a generous amount of sunscreen and repeat the application during the day and after bathing.
- You should be extra careful if you go sailing or skiing, play golf, spend time at the beach, or take part in any other activity where there is a risk of exposing your skin to the sun.

- Remember that your skin needs protection even if you are not purposely sunbathing. It's easy to forget this fact when doing activities like gardening and taking walks.
- Tip! [Min soltid](#) is a website created by the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority that lets you calculate how long you can be out in the sun without sun protection.

Self-examination

It is important that you check your skin regularly. Familiarise yourself with the shape, colour and size of any pigmentation changes in your skin. Any mole that changes in appearance, grows, becomes darker, or develops irregular borders should be examined by a dermatologist. If you discover any new skin lesions that aren't like others you have, any lesion that has changed, or a sore that won't heal, for example, you should contact a doctor.