



As summer arrives and starts to warm things up, we need to be mindful of the effects the sun's rays can have if we don't take proper precautions. If you are like me and love being in the sun, this article is a must read for you!

What is UV? UV rays are rays of radiation emitted by the sun. There are three types of UV radiation. UVA is the type that penetrates deeply into the skin causing wrinkling and leathering. UVB is the type that causes those pesky sunburns. Last, but not least, is UVC which is blocked by the Earth's Ozone layer. UV levels are the highest around noon and near reflective surfaces such as snow and sand.

You can also receive artificial UV rays, through tanning beds. This form of UV is the most dangerous and accounts for an estimated 400,000 skin cancer cases per year in the United States alone.

Types of Skin Cancer. There are three major types of skin cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, basal cell carcinoma affects nearly 5.4 million people yearly; squamous cell carcinoma affects nearly 3.3 million people yearly; and invasive melanoma, which accounts for the majority of deaths from skin cancer, affects 1% of cases. These numbers are astonishing! A great way to check for signs of skin cancer is to do routine self-checks, looking for any skin changes. I have included a helpful link at the bottom of this post with instructions.

UV and your eyes. When we think about sun protection, we think about sunscreen, cover ups, and large brimmed hats. What we don't think of very often is how the sun's UV rays can affect our eyes. The sun's rays can damage the delicate tissues of the eye, increasing the chance of cataracts, macular degeneration, corneal sunburn, and pterygium.

What can be done to protect against harmful UV? The basics of sun protection, most already know. Wear protective clothing such as a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, long-sleeves, and sun screen. When applying sunscreen make sure you are choosing the correct product for your level of need and apply it correctly and often. Usually apply to all areas every 2 hours (or more often with sweating and being in the water). Other things to keep in mind are to stay in the shade between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when UV levels are the highest, avoid artificial UV rays (tanning beds), check your local UV index when planning activities for the amount of protection needed.

Take the Sun Quiz from the American Cancer Society, to see if you know how to remain safe in the sun!

Above all have a safe and happy summer season!

Skin Self-Check <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/skin-cancer/galleries/skin-self-exam-gallery.html>

Sun Quiz <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/be-safe-in-sun/sun-safety.html>

