

a healthy conversation

Beat the heat

Don't let those summer rays sneak up on you!

From Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield

School's out for the summer, time spent outdoors is increasing and the sun is getting warmer. However, just a few serious sunburns can increase risk of skin cancer later in life. It's important to safely protect yourself against damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays whenever outdoors.

- **Seek shade:** UV rays are strongest during midday, so if you're planning to spend all day outside, make sure and have a tree, umbrella, or pop-up tent nearby to seek shelter from the sun if you're getting too hot.
- **Protect in style:** Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect areas like the face, scalp, ears, and neck that are sensitive and tend to burn easily. Also invest in

a good pair of sunglasses to protect your eyes from UV rays, which can lead to cataracts later in life. Look for a pair that protects against UVA and UVB rays as much as possible.

- **Apply sunscreen:** Use sunscreen with at least SPF 30 and UVA and UVB protection whenever you are outdoors this summer. Many sunscreens wear off after activity in the sun, so be sure to reapply as needed.
- **Stay hydrated:** Because your body loses fluids from sweating, it's important to drink more water than usual in the hot summer months to prevent heat exhaustion.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), unprotected skin can be damaged by the summer sun in less than just 15 minutes, but can take up to 12 hours for your skin to show the full effect of sun exposure.

Prevention is truly the best defense for skin issues down the road. If you have questions about sunburns or skin damage, use Wellmark's Be-Well 24/7 service available anytime, anywhere. When you call 844-84-BEWELL (239355), you'll be connected with a real person who can help answer questions or provide you with the resources to seek further care.

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