

# SUN PROTECTION

## What are the dangers?

### In the short term...

sunburn can blister your skin and make it peel, but even mild reddening is a sign of skin damage.



### In the long term...

too much sun will speed up the ageing of your skin, making it leathery, mottled and wrinkled, but the most serious effect is an increased chance of developing skin cancer.

## Abnormal reactions to sunlight

Some medicines, contact with some chemicals used at work (such as dyes, wood preservatives, coal-tar and pitch products), and contact with some plants, can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight. Your works doctor or family doctor should be able to advise you further. Take this leaflet with you.



## Who is at risk of skin cancer?

Some people are more liable to skin cancers than others. People with white skin are at most risk. Take particular care if you have:

- fair or freckled skin that doesn't tan, or goes red or burns before it tans;
- red or fair hair and light coloured eyes;
- a large number of moles - over 100 in young people, or over 50 in older people.

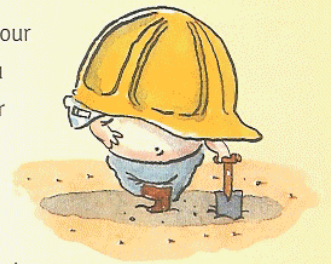
Workers of Asian or Afro-Caribbean origin are at almost no risk of skin cancer from sunlight.

## What can I do to protect myself?

Even if your skin is not fair and freckled, you should still be particularly careful while you are working out of doors in the summer in the three or four hours around midday. The sun is most intense at these times. Even on cloudy days, UV can filter through.

## Some Dos and Don'ts to avoid the dangers are:

- Do try to avoid the mild reddening which is a sign of skin damage as well as being an early sign of burning;
- Do try to work and take your breaks in the shade if you can - this will reduce your risk of harming your skin and also help to keep you cool;
- Do continue to take care when you go on holiday - your skin remembers every exposure;
- Don't be complacent; get to know your skin's most vulnerable areas (eg back of neck, head) and keep them covered;
- Don't try to get a tan - it's not a healthy sign. It might look good but it indicates that the skin has already been damaged. A suntan does not eliminate the long-term cancer risk which is associated with prolonged exposure to the sun; nor will it protect against premature ageing.



## Clothing

Cover up. Ordinary clothing made from close-woven fabric, such as a long-sleeved workshirt and jeans, will stop most of the UV.