

Those long summer days and nights are underway, and here at the Y, we all agree it's about time!

Knowing what to do to stay safe and enjoy those summer rays is important to your health and well-being. Wearing sunscreen is key.

By protecting you from harmful radiation from the sun, sunscreen reduces your risk of skin cancer, premature aging and sunburns.

You can boost your protection by choosing the right sunscreen and wearing it every day, rain or shine.

Sunscreen protects your skin from the sun's ultraviolet, or UV, rays. Two types of UV rays, known as UVA and UVB, trigger harmful changes in your skin. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, UVA rays account for up to 95 percent of the ultraviolet radiation that reaches the Earth's surface. Both UVA and UVB rays contribute to the development of skin cancer, including basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma. The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends that everyone protect their skin by wearing sunscreen every day, all year round, rain or shine.

Wearing sunscreen every day also helps prevent premature aging. The authors of a June 2013 article published in the "Annals of Internal Medicine" reported on a study comparing recommended daily use of sunscreen versus discretionary use in people younger than 55. At the conclusion of their 4.5-year study, the researchers found 24 percent less skin aging in the group advised to use sunscreen daily compared to the group using sunscreen at their own discretion. Aging was measured by lines and coarseness of the skin.

In 2012, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration released new regulations for sunscreen labels. The Skin Cancer Foundation states you should look for a sunscreen that offers broad-spectrum UV coverage and has an SPF of at least 15. Also, don't forget to reapply as directed on the sunscreen bottle's label. In most cases, sunscreen doesn't block the sun or last for more than 2 hours.

Get out there and enjoy the summer, but don't forget the sunscreen. It could save your life!

#### **Resources:**

M.C.B. Hughes, G.M. Williams, P. Baker, and A.C. Green. (2013, June 4). Sunscreen and Prevention of Skin Aging. Retrieved from <http://annals.org/aim/fullarticle/1691732/sunscreen-prevention-skin-aging>

Skin Cancer Foundation. Skin Cancer Facts & Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/skin-cancer-facts>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2017, July 14). Sunscreen: How to Help Protect Your Skin from the Sun. Retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/UnderstandingOver-the-CounterMedicines/ucm239463.htm>