

# Sun and Heat Safety

Strong sunlight and extremely hot temperatures can be dangerous to your health. Health risks are greatest for older travellers, infants and young children, those who have chronic illnesses, difficulty breathing or are physically impaired.

## Sun safety tips

Dress for the weather: Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made from breathable fabric. UV-protective clothing can offer an additional level of protection.

Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of cool liquids, especially water, before you feel thirsty to decrease your risk of dehydration.

Avoid sun exposure: Wear a wide-brimmed, breathable hat or use an umbrella.

Wear sunglasses: make sure they provide protection against UVA and UVB rays.

Limit your time in the sun: Stay indoors or seek shade between 10am and 4pm. Reflections off snow, water, sand and concrete can increase the effect of UV rays. Protect yourself on cloudy days, while swimming and skiing.

Use sunscreen: Broad spectrum sunscreen with a SPF30 or greater is recommended. Choose a product that is sweat and water resistant. Apply the sunscreen liberally 30 minutes prior to sun exposure, ensuring all exposed areas are protected. Reapply every 1-2 hours, after swimming, profuse sweating or towel drying. Wait 15 minutes before applying insect repellent

## Sunburn

Sunburn is caused by overexposure to UV rays.

Spectrum	Characteristics
UV A Spectrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not cause sunburn</li> <li>• Associated with photosensitivity reactions, premature aging and skin cancer</li> <li>• Present throughout the day</li> <li>• Penetrates the skin deeply</li> <li>• Passes through window glass</li> </ul>
UV B Spectrum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most responsible for sunburn and skin cancer</li> <li>• Strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.</li> <li>• Blocked by window glass</li> </ul>



Possible symptoms of sunburn include:

- Red, tender skin that is warm or sensitive to the touch
- Blisters that develop hours or days later
- Peeling skin on sunburned areas several days after the sunburn

If you have been in the sun long enough to get a severe sunburn you may be at increased risk of heat illness. Some symptoms of heat illness are similar to sunburn so it is important to be aware of both to protect yourself.

While the symptoms are usually temporary, skin damage is cumulative throughout a person's life and can develop into serious long-term health effects, including skin cancer.

Some medications increase the risk of photosensitivity reactions. Medications that are especially concerning to travellers are some antibiotics, altitude sickness medications,

## Heat illness

Heat illnesses include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat fainting, heat edema (swelling of hands, feet and ankles), heat rash and heat cramps (muscle cramps). Heat illnesses can affect you quickly and are mainly caused by overexposure or overexertion in the heat.

Watch for symptoms of heat illness, which include:

- dizziness or fainting
- nausea or vomiting
- headache
- rapid breathing and heartbeat
- extreme thirst (dry mouth or sticky saliva) and
- decreased urination with unusually dark yellow urine

If you experience any of these symptoms during hot weather, immediately move to a cool place and drink liquids. Water is best.

Heat stroke is a **medical emergency!** Call 911 or the local emergency number immediately if someone has a high body temperature and is either unconscious, confused, or has stopped sweating.