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August is Summer Sun Safety Month in the United States, and for good reason! The summer sun can be harsh, and it's essential to take steps to protect yourself. Whether you're spending time at the park, beach or just hanging out in your backyard, remember to stay safe in the sun.

**Skin cancer is now the most common cancer in the United States. Repeated exposure to the sun's harmful rays can cause skin cancer. Protect your skin from the sun's harmful rays.**

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While a tan may look great, it's important to remember that there is no safe tan. There are plenty of self-tanning options available that let you achieve a bronzed glow without the harmful side effects of ultraviolet radiation that come from the sun and tanning beds. If you must have tan-looking skin, opt for a self-tanning lotion or spray.

### **Wear sunscreen.**

Apply sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all exposed skin, and re-apply every two hours or more often if you're swimming or sweating.

### **Wear protective clothing.**

Wearing protective clothing is one of the most effective ways to reduce your risk of sun damage. Long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats can all help to shield your skin from harmful UV rays.

### **Drink lots of fluids to stay hydrated in the sun.**

One of the most important things to remember when spending time in the sun is to stay hydrated. It's crucial to drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Symptoms of dehydration include thirst, fatigue, and lightheadedness, so it's important to watch out for these signs.

### **Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun.**

Wearing sunglasses can help protect your eyes from the sun's harmful rays. Buy sunglasses that block out at least 99% of UV rays and wear them whenever you're outdoors.

### **Seek shade.**

Shade can come from trees, umbrellas, or even buildings. When you're in the shade, you're automatically protected from most of the sun's UV rays. However, it's important to remember that even in the shade, you're not entirely safe from the sun.

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## The UV Index

- This index measures the daily intensity of the UV rays. A low UV index requires minimal protection, while a high UV index requires maximum protection
- Check the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) UV index before going outside

1-2 Low	No protection required
3-5 Medium	Protection required
6-7 High	Protection essential
8-10 Very high	Need shade
11 Extreme	Can't go outdoor

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**Vaccination is the Best Protection**

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Fewer than 25% of adults get their recommended vaccines, and minority populations have even lower immunization rates. During National Immunization Awareness Month in August, we aim to help increase vaccination rates for all Americans by addressing social and health inequities.

- Medicare covers the following vaccines:
  - COVID-19
  - Flu
  - Hepatitis B
  - Pneumococcal

The Inflation Reduction Act improves coverage and lowers out-of-pocket costs for recommended vaccines. Your patients pay nothing if you accept assignment. Find out when your patient is eligible for these vaccines. If you need help, contact your eligibility service provider.

More Information:

- [CDC Adult Vaccination Resources](#)
- [Office of Minority Health Immunization and Vaccine Resources](#)
- [Medicare Part D Vaccines fact sheet](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine, flu shots, pneumococcal shots, and hepatitis B shots](#)

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