



How does ultraviolet (UV) radiation impact on sports?

Sporting clubs can play a very important role in managing people's exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation throughout the year.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Playing sport and active recreation are common activities where people get sunburnt, especially adolescents.

It is UV radiation that causes eye and skin damage (a result of both tanning and burning) and increases the risk of skin cancer. Use sun protection when the UV index is three and above and take particular care when UV is most intense between 10am and 3pm.

Right across Victoria, UV levels are at three and above from September to April. In the winter months, UV is generally below three unless you're in alpine areas or near reflective surfaces like snow.

Temperature should not be used as a guide for when sun protection is needed. Even when the temperature is cool, UV levels can still be high.

To check UV levels, go to the SunSmart UV Alert at sunsmart.com.au.

A combination of sun protection measures are recommended when UV levels are at three and above:

1. *Slip* on some sun-protective clothing - that covers as much skin as possible.
2. *Slop* on SPF30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before you head out and take a bottle or tube with you so you can re-apply every two hours.
3. *Slap* on a hat - a wide brimmed hat will protect your face, head, neck and ears. Baseball caps do not provide enough coverage.
4. *Seek* shade, especially when UV levels peak in the middle of the day.
5. *Slide* on some sunglasses - make sure they meet Australian Standards, are close-fitting, wrap around and cover as much of the eye area as possible.

Some sun is important for vitamin D, with most people in Victoria needing only a few minutes a day between September and April, and two to three hours spread over a week during the winter months.

SunSmart in partnership with Smartplay has developed a UV exposure and heat illness guide. The guide outlines practical steps to create a safe and enjoyable environment for participation in sport and physical activity.

To find out more about skin cancer, sun protection and vitamin D, and to download the guide and the modifiable UV exposure and heat illness checklist, visit www.sunsmart.com.au or www.smartplay.com.au.