

10.2.2: UV Index

Learning Objectives

- Identify the different UV Index levels and the associated risk of sunburn.
- Demonstrate how to use the UV Index to plan outdoor activities and choose appropriate sun protection measures.
- Discuss how factors like time of day, location, cloud cover, and elevation can impact the UV Index.

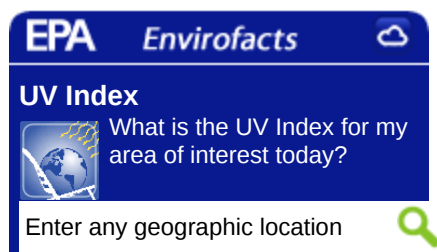
The **UV Index** provides a daily forecast of the expected intensity of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Some exposure to sunlight is enjoyable. However, too much sun can be dangerous. Overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation can cause immediate damage, such as sunburn, and long-term problems, such as skin cancer and cataracts.

It is important to remember that people of all skin types need to be protected from overexposure to the sun. Overexposure to UV radiation poses the risk of serious **health effects** for everyone, but not everyone is equally at risk. For example, you may be at greater risk of contracting skin cancer if your skin always burns; if you have blond or red hair; or blue, green, or gray eyes. Other factors indicating an increased risk of skin cancer include: a history of blistering sunburns in early childhood, the presence of many moles, or a family history of skin cancer. However, it is a good idea to remember that all people, no matter what skin type, are equally at risk of eye damage.

Exposure Category	Index Number	Sun Protection Messages
LOW	<2	You can safely enjoy being outside. Wear sunglasses on bright days. If you burn easily, cover up and use sunscreen SPF 15+ . In winter, reflection off snow can nearly double UV strength.
MODERATE	3-5	Take precautions if you will be outside, such as wearing a hat and sunglasses and using sunscreen SPF 30+ . Reduce your exposure to the sun's most intense UV radiation by seeking shade during midday hours.
HIGH	6-7	Protection against sun damage is needed. Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, use sunscreen SPF 30+ and wear a long-sleeved shirt and pants when practical. Reduce your exposure to the sun's most intense UV radiation by seeking shade during midday hours.
VERY HIGH	8-10	Protection against sun damage is needed. If you need to be outside during midday hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., take steps to reduce sun exposure. A shirt, hat and sunscreen are a must, and be sure you seek shade. Beachgoers should know that white sand and other bright surfaces reflect UV and can double UV exposure.
EXTREME	11+	Protection against sun damage is needed. If you need to be outside during midday hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., take steps to reduce sun exposure. A shirt, hat and sunscreen are a must, and be sure you seek shade. Beachgoers should know that white sand and other bright surfaces reflect UV and can double UV exposure.

For more information on UV Index, click on the [A Guide To The UV Index](#).

UV Index Widget:



Original Source: <https://www.epa.gov/enviro/uv-index-description>

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