

Planning SunSmart outdoor events



Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in New Zealand. New Zealand also has one of the highest melanoma incidence rates in the world. Most skin cancers are caused by excessive ultraviolet radiation (UVR) exposure. There is an established link between sunburn, especially if it occurs in childhood and adolescence, and melanoma.

Sunburning UVR is strongest between September and April especially between 10am and 4pm. UVR cannot be felt, is invisible and its effects are delayed, therefore its presence is not obvious, unlike heat for example. That is why particular care is needed in planning outdoor events during the summer.

Planning checklist

- When planning outdoor activities between September and April, try to schedule them to minimise time in the high UV danger period, which is between 10am–4pm.
- Offer sun protection for participants, spectators and staff by providing effective shade. For example:
 - use marquees, tents and umbrellas
 - allocate shaded areas
 - encourage people to bring portable shade structures, like beach umbrellas.
- Encourage people to bring their own sunscreen and provide or sell sunscreen to staff, participants and spectators.
- Contact your local Division of the Cancer Society for advice.
- Promote the SunSmart message in your literature/ publicity.
- Use the public address system to remind people to be SunSmart.

Sun protection strategies

Encourage officials and participants:

- to wear hats with wide brims (at least 7.5 cm) or bucket style hats (deep crown and at least 6 cm brim). (Caps or visors do not shade the face and neck adequately for long periods outside and, therefore, are not recommended.)
- to wear shirts with long sleeves and a collar
- to wear long-legged shorts or trousers
- to protect exposed skin with SPF30+, broad spectrum sunscreen.
- to wear sunglasses that meet the AS/NZ Standard NZ1067.

Promoting the message

Put a SunSmart message on your programmes, invitations, flyers, tickets, posters and signage. The following can be photocopied and incorporated in your publications. This will serve to remind people to be SunSmart when planning to attend your event.

Events aimed at children

Where events are focused on or involve children make sure that adults (eg. parents, teachers) ensure that sun protection, including wearing hats and sunscreen, is carried out.

SunSmart reminders

At your outdoor event you can give SunSmart reminders over the public address system. You can use some of the following:

- Don't spoil your day by getting sunburnt – remember to Slip! Slop! Slap! and Wrap!
- Save Your Skin. Use your head and keep your hat on!
- It may be cool and overcast but you can still get burnt. So Slip! Slop! Slap! and Wrap!
- Take some time out of the sun and grab some shade.
- Have you got your sunscreen on today? Remember to re-apply it thickly and evenly every couple of hours.

Ideas to consider in the future

Adopt or develop a SunSmart policy for your organisation or update rules to incorporate SunSmart actions. Please refer to the Cancer Society's website for a Sample Policy for Outdoor Events www.cancernz.org.nz

Discuss SunSmart ideas with other organisations to learn how they have become SunSmart.

Involve staff and others in exploring possible alternatives to current practice.

For further information on sun protection or skin cancer contact the Cancer Society of New Zealand www.cancernz.org.nz.

The Ultraviolet Index (UVI)

The Ultraviolet Index (UVI) is an international, scientific measure of the level of ultraviolet radiation (UVR) in the environment. The higher the number the greater the risk of skin damage. The Cancer Society advises sun protection when the UVI is 3 or higher.

UV Index	Sun Protection
1-2 Green LOW	No protection required
3-5 Yellow MODERATE	Protection required when spending extended periods in the sun, especially if you have fair skin
6-7 Amber HIGH	Protection essential between 10am and 4pm. Slip, slop, slap and wrap.
8-10 Red VERY HIGH	Seek shade between 10am and 4pm. Slip, slop, slap and wrap. Cover up. Re-apply sunscreen regularly.
11+ Purple EXTREME	Reschedule outdoor activities for early morning and evening. Full protection essential.

UVI levels can be found in daily newspapers and on TV One's weather forecast (during the summer months) and on the SunSmart website www.sunsmart.org.nz.