

Sun Protection tips for ATHLETES & SPORTS SPECTATORS

Play it a shade safer when playing or watching sports!

While many of us remember sun protection when heading to the beach or outdoor swimming pool, we sometimes forget when we prepare to hit the field or attend a sporting event. Sun protection is easy and should be a part of an everyday healthy lifestyle.

GETTING READY FOR THE GAME



The sun's rays are most harmful during 11 am - 3 pm

Sunscreen

The sun's UV rays can harm your skin most between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. which is also the perfect time to get out and play. So before hitting the field for a game or practice, apply a broad spectrum, SPF 30 or higher, sunscreen and remember to reapply after vigorous activity or sweating.

Be diligent; apply your sunscreen to all exposed areas: face, legs, arms, ears and the back of your neck. Be sure to use an SPF 30 or higher lip balm too.



Clothing

If possible, wear clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible. Choose tightly-woven materials that are light and cool, such as cotton or lightweight synthetics. When held up to a light, very little light should be able to penetrate the fabric. For example, denim is a great fabric because of its dense weave but not ideal for playing sports.

Don't forget about your eyes, wear sunglasses with 100% UV protection. Wraparound styles are best since they protect the entire eye and are still easy to wear during sports.



GAME OFFICIALS

Most games you spend more time on the field than the players, so remember you to need proper sun protection as well. Sunscreen, hats and sunglasses are a must!

Apply sunscreen as you're getting ready, approximately 15-20 minutes before heading outside. The tops of the ears and neck are often overlooked and become very tender when sunburnt – be thorough when you're putting on your sunscreen.

SPECTATORS

Remember, you are often out in the sun longer than athletes and through parts of the day when the sun's rays are at their strongest (noon to 2 pm) making sun protection even more important.

Plan for a day outside:

- Apply and reapply an SPF 30 or higher sunscreen when watching the game.
- Wear clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible, shirts with collars will help to protect your neck, and
- Choose a wide brimmed hat and 100% UV protection sunglasses.

HOW TO CHOOSE A SUNSCREEN

There are many sunscreen options available and it can be overwhelming when trying to choose the best one. Here are some tips to consider when making your next selection, choose a sunscreen that:

- is broad-spectrum, this means it protects against both UVA and UVB radiation
- has a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher
- is hypoallergenic and non-comedogenic, this way the formulation is less likely to cause an adverse reaction and it won't clog your pores.
- is water-resistant or sweat-resistant

When in doubt, look for the Canadian Dermatology Association's Sun Protection Program logo. For information about the Sun Protection Program visit: www.dermatology.ca

CONSIDER SUN PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

For commercially marketed sun protective clothing, the Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) ratings coincide closely with the SPF values given to sunscreen products in Canada and elsewhere.

UPF Ratings and Protection Categories

UPF rating (ultraviolet protection factor)	Protection Category	% UVR blocked (ultraviolet rays)
15 - 24	Good	93.3 - 95.9
25 - 39	Very Good	96.0 - 97.4
40 - 50	Excellent	97.5 or more

If sun protective clothing is not an option then be mindful of the “hole effect” when choosing clothing as a sun protection measure.

The “Hole Effect” *

All fabric that is woven has holes between the individual threads. The tighter the weave and denser the fibre, the better protection this clothing can offer – denim is a perfect example. But if your clothing becomes worn out, tight fitting or wet, these altered states will increase the size of the holes and the amount of UV exposure.

* Phrase attributable to Menzies S, Lukins P, Greenoak G, et al.