

Sunburns

Introduction:

Sun is one of the most important natural sources to acquire a variety of health benefits, such as the production of vitamin D. However, everything has its pros and cons depending on how it is used. For example, unhealthy sun exposure to produce vitamin D may lead to sunburns.

Sunburns definition

Redness and damage to the skin, accompanied by pain in the affected area and inability to even touch it due to the wrong exposure to the sun; resulting from ultraviolet rays.

Symptoms:

- Skin redness.
- skin swelling.
- Itching.
- blisters
- Fever.
- Nausea.
- Headache
- Fatigue.

Sunburns stages:

1. First: During the first hours of sun exposure, the skin may turn red and the person becomes unable to touch the reddish area.
2. Second: Within 6 to 48 hours after exposure, the pain becomes worse.
3. Third: The skin begins to peel within two to eight days after exposure to sun rays.

Prevention:

- Avoid spending too much time under the sun in extremely hot periods.
- Use sunscreens.
- Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible, especially in times of intense sunlight and heat.
- Use personal protective equipment in workplaces exposed to sunlight (helmet, glasses and glove).
- Provide umbrellas in public places and workplaces.
- If you are exposed to sunlight to take vitamin D, it is sufficient to spend 10 to 15 minutes at times when the intensity and temperature are not severe.

Sunscreens:

Over the past years, the number of skin cancer cases has increased globally, resulting in increased production and use of sunscreen products, particularly from UV rays. Prolonged exposure to the sun without the use of creams or protective products causes a number of health problems for the eye and the immune system of the body, in addition to the skin. People most at risk from sun exposure are: Athletes, children, residents of high and hot areas, and staff working under the sun.

Healthy application:

- Select a product containing a protection factor of 30 (SPF) or more.
- Apply the product every two hours if you stay in the sun.
- Check the product's validity date.
- If there is no expiration date the product is used for 3 years, if it is not exposed to high temperatures.



Other sun protection methods:

- Wear clothing that may cover as much of the body parts as possible.
- Use of sunglasses.
- use of hats and umbrellas.

Misconceptions:

Only using protection from sun creams and products without using other recommended means.

Treatment:

First: First aid:

- Drinking fluids
- Administering analgesic and antipyretic.
- Use cold compresses or showers with mildly cold water (not too cold).
- Use moisturizing creams.
- Cover sores with a bandage.
- Avoid removing sores before they dry out and start peeling off the skin.
- Do not expose the skin to sun until it heals.

Second: It is important to seek medical attention in the following cases:

- If the area of burns is large or multiple.
- If pain persists for more than 48 hours.
- Extreme dehydration
- Acute fever

Complications:

- Bacterial infections.
- Premature ageing signs, such as: wrinkles, dryness, black spots and others
- Skin Cancer
- Eye damage such as lens blurring (cataract) or blindness.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Wrong practices include the use of household items in the treatment of burns, such as: toothpaste.

- **Which areas are the most sensitive to sunburn?**
 - Face and eyes
 - hands and feet
 - chest and back
 - Genitals
 - Skin folds
- **Is it correct to use toothpaste?**

There is no scientific evidence.
- **Do people with dark skin not get sunburn?**

No, all people are susceptible to sunburn, but people with light skin are more likely as they have less sunburn protection.
- **Does the use of artificial tanning methods reduce the incidence of sunburn?**

The use of artificial tanning methods does not reduce the risk of sunburn, because the increase in the proportion of melanin in this way is by 2-4 SPF, i.e. it does not reach the minimum level required for protection from radiation, which is 15 SPF.
- **When should I see a doctor?**
 1. in case of changes in vision
 2. Increased swelling
 3. Pus.
 4. Increased pain when touched
- **Should sunscreens be used only in summer?**

Sunscreens should be used every day, even during winter because sun rays contain ultraviolet rays which were found to be associated with skin problems and may cause cancer.



وزارة الصحة
Ministry of Health

- **Do sunscreens cause cancer?**

There is no evidence yet that sunscreens are related to cancer, as these creams prevent the effects of harmful rays that may increase the incidence of cancer.

- **Are higher-priced products better as sunscreens?**

The price of the product has nothing to do with its effectiveness, all you have to check is the expiry date and the product contains a compound of 30 (SPF) or more.

Clinical Health Education Department

For more information, please contact us via:

Hpromotion@moh.gov.sa