

Retiree Benefits News



Sunshine smart – Protect yourself from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays

Spending time outdoors is a great way to stay active, enjoy nature, and connect with family and friends. Whether you're gardening, walking the dog, golfing, or spending time with grandchildren, it's important to remember that UV rays from the sun can damage your skin and eyes. As we age, our skin becomes thinner and more vulnerable to sun damage, making UV protection an important part of maintaining our overall health and well-being.

The good news is that a few simple habits can significantly reduce your risk. When spending time outside, wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and reapply it every two hours, especially if you're swimming or sweating. A wide-brimmed hat, lightweight long-sleeved clothing, and sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays provide additional protection. Whenever possible, schedule outdoor activities earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon, as UV rays are typically strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

UV exposure can affect more than just your skin. Long-term exposure may increase the risk of cataracts, macular degeneration, and other eye conditions. It can also contribute to skin cancer, which is one of the most common forms of cancer. That's why it's important to pay attention to any new or changing spots on your skin and discuss concerns with your health care provider. Routine skin checks can help identify potential issues early when treatment is most effective.

Enjoying the sunshine doesn't mean avoiding it altogether, it simply means being prepared. Make sun protection part of your daily routine by checking the UV index, seeking shade when possible, staying hydrated, and protecting your skin and eyes whenever you're outdoors. With a few smart precautions, you can continue to enjoy all the benefits of an active outdoor lifestyle while helping protect your health for years to come.