

PRESS RELEASE

14 May 2018

Stay safe in the sun

Summer's almost here and with temperatures starting to soar, Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Wiltshire Council are supporting Sun Awareness Week (14–20 May) by offering advice to people in Wiltshire on how to stay safe in the sun.

Many of us enjoy spending time in the sun, but you can burn when you least expect it. Sitting in the garden, walking the dog or going for a run are just a few activities where you can be caught off guard.

Dr Richard Sandford–Hill, GP at Market Lavington Surgery and Chair of Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “Although a moderate amount of sun exposure is recommended because it provides essential vitamin D, too much sun can be damaging. Don't forget; you can still burn if it's cloudy or overcast and while sunburn is usually short-lived and mild, it's important to take precautions to avoid it because it can increase the chances of developing skin cancer later in life.”

How to protect yourself from sunburn

You can help safeguard your skin from the harmful effects of the sun by following these simple steps.

- Cover up when you are out in the sun – wear loose clothing and a wide-brimmed hat to protect as much skin as possible and protect your eyes with sunglasses that block at least 99% of UV light.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher and at least 4-star UVA protection and reapply every 2 hours and after swimming.
- Seek shade and limit your direct exposure to the sun, especially between 11am and 3pm when UV rays are at their strongest.
- Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps – both cause serious long-term damage and contribute to skin cancer.

Dr Sandford-Hill added: “It’s important to enjoy the sun safely by keeping hydrated and when you are out remember to carry a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses with you for protecting yourselves from the sun’s harmful rays.”

Jerry Wickham, Wiltshire Council cabinet member for public health said: “Wiltshire in the sunshine is glorious and we want people to enjoy it, but it can be easy to underestimate the strength of the sun when you’re outside, and you may not realise you are getting burnt. If you feel you have sunburn, you should get out of the sun as soon as possible by heading indoors or into a shady area.”

What to do if you have sunburn

If you do have minor sunburn, you can treat this at home by cooling the skin down by having a cold bath or shower and then applying soothing after sun or calamine lotion to moisturise your skin. You could also visit your local pharmacy for advice on treatment to help ease your symptoms and reduce inflammation.

Drinking plenty of fluids, will help cool you down and prevent you from getting dehydrated, and painkillers such as ibuprofen or paracetamol will help relieve any pain.

If you start to feel unwell or have any concerns about your sunburn, particularly if you are burnt over a large area, have blistering or swelling of the skin, chills, dizziness, sickness or a high temperature of 38c or above, call NHS 111 – they are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you notice any changes to your skin after being out in the sun, including a new mole, growth or lump or you have any moles or freckles that have changed in size, shape or colour, you should go and get them seen by your GP. Skin cancer is much easier to treat if it’s found early.

For further information on how to keep safe in the sun, visit:

www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

- NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is the commissioner of health care services for the population of Wiltshire. The CCG is led by local GPs who have first-hand experience of what their patients need.
- The CCG consists of 49 GP member practices and works closely with local partners including Wiltshire Council, local NHS providers, patients and the public to manage existing NHS services and implement new services to ensure that high quality health and social care is delivered to the population as close to their home as possible.

Further information can be found on the website www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk

Further information:

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