



COACH'S GUIDE ON SUN SAFETY FOR ATHLETES

DID YOU KNOW?

While some sun exposure can be enjoyable, too much is dangerous. Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight and indoor tanning devices result in serious health effects, including skin cancer. Youth are particularly at risk of overexposure since a substantial amount of the average person's lifetime UV exposure occurs before the age of 18. Even one severe sunburn in childhood can double the risk of developing skin cancer. Most people are not aware that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States.

Some athletes spend a great deal of time outdoors exposed to the sun's harmful rays. By following a number of simple steps, everyone can enjoy time outdoors while being protected from overexposure to UV radiation. Nearly all skin cancer can be prevented through sun safe behaviors. As a coach, you can provide youth with sun safe environments and the knowledge and skills necessary to practice sun safe behaviors.

SUN SAFE BEHAVIORS

SLIP ON A SHIRT A long-sleeved shirt is your best protection. If you choose a short-sleeve shirt, be sure to apply sunscreen on the areas of skin that are exposed.

SLOP ON SUNSCREEN Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more. To be effective, sunscreen needs to be generously applied 30 minutes before sun exposure and reapplied every two hours and after swimming or sweating.

SLAP ON A HAT The head and neck are common places for skin cancer to appear. For maximum protection, a three to four inch wide-brimmed hat should be worn. Be sure to apply sunscreen to the ears and neck if a smaller hat is worn.

WRAP ON SUNGLASSES Sunglasses protect the eyes and the skin around the eyes. Choose sunglasses that block 100% of both UVA and UVB rays.

SUN SAFETY TIPS

- Serve as a role model by engaging in sun safe behaviors.
- Encourage school administrators and board members to support skin cancer prevention programs and school policies that promote sun safety.
- Teach athletes about the importance of sun safe behaviors by including skin cancer prevention as part of a coordinated school health program.
- Provide sun safety education during times of the year when athletes are exposed to the sun.
- Provide sun safety information to parents and caregivers.

Sources: American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Environmental Protection Agency
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The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service. No matter who you are, we can help. Contact us anytime, day or night, for information and support.
Hope.Progress.Answers.® / 1.800.ACS.2345 / www.cancer.org