

For more information about sun-smart behaviors and preventing skin cancer, contact:

New Mexico Department of Health  
Comprehensive Cancer Program  
5301 Central Ave NE, Ste. 800  
Albuquerque, NM 87108  
(505) 222-8613

[www.cancernm.org](http://www.cancernm.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Cancer Prevention and Control  
1-888-842-6355

[www.cdc.gov/ChooseYourCover](http://www.cdc.gov/ChooseYourCover)

The National Cancer Institute  
Cancer Information Service  
1-800-4-CANCER or 1-800-422-6237

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)



## Choose Your Cover

for safe fun in the sun

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Sunlight is necessary for life on earth, but too much of it can be harmful.

Sunburns aren't just painful. A few severe sunburns in childhood can increase a person's chances for developing skin cancer.

And that healthy tan? It's actually a sign that your skin has been damaged by ultraviolet radiation.

So what can you do to protect yourself?

Choose Your Cover!





## Stay Under Cover

Whenever possible, avoid the midday sun, when ultraviolet (UV) rays are the strongest and do the most damage. Trees, umbrellas, and tents are all good sources of shade.

UV rays are strongest in summer and at high elevations. Without protection on a summer day, skin can be damaged by the sun's UV rays in as little as 10 minutes.

Although anyone can get skin cancer, the risk is greatest for people who have fair skin and sunburn easily.

**Parents:** Protect your kids from sun damage - and always keep babies under age 6 months out of the sun completely.

**If you can't avoid the midday sun or find shade, try these other options.**

## Rub In Your Cover

Use sunscreen whenever you go outside - even on cloudy days.

Choose a sunscreen that provides protection against both UVA and UVB rays and has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.

Sunscreen works best when applied generously 30 minutes before going outdoors. Reapply every 2 hours, and more often after swimming or exercise.



## Cover Your Head

When outdoors, wear a hat. Since almost 80% of skin cancers occur on the head and neck, wearing a wide-brimmed hat is a great way to shade your face, ears, scalp, and neck from the sun's rays.

If you choose a baseball cap, make sure you use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15+ to protect exposed areas of skin.

## Wear Your Cover

When you're enjoying your favorite outdoor activities, it's important to shield your skin with extra clothing.



A long-sleeved shirt, beach cover-up, and pants are all good choices for cover. But keep in mind, a typical t-shirt actually has a rating a lot lower than SPF 15.

So if your clothes don't completely shield your skin, add some sunscreen and seek shade whenever possible.

## And Don't Forget to Grab Your Shades

It's the best way to protect your eyes - to reduce the risk of developing cataracts.

