

# Sun and Heat Exposure



*EH&S Fact Sheet  
July 2005*

## Sun Exposure :

Hot summer months pose special hazards for USC staff that perform physical activity both at work and at home. To protect yourself from the harmful effects of heat and sun exposure, you should know the potential hazards and how to manage them.

Sunlight contains ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can cause premature aging of the skin, wrinkles, cataracts, and even skin cancer. Be especially careful in the sun if you burn easily, spend a lot of time outdoors, or have fair skin or blond, red, or light brown hair. Observe the following precautions:

- **Cover up.** Wear tightly woven clothing that you can't see through.
- **Use sunscreen.** A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 percent of UV rays.
- **Wear a hat.** A wide brim hat works best because it protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.
- **Wear UV-absorbent shades.** Sunglasses don't have to be expensive, but they should block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.
- **Limit exposure.** UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

## Heat Exposure :

The combination of heat and humidity can be a health threat during the summer months, so take these additional precautions:

- Drink plenty of water before you get thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing—cotton is good.
- Take frequent short breaks in cool shade.
- Eat smaller meals before work activity.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol or large amounts of sugar.
- Find out from your health care provider if your medications and heat don't mix.
- Know that equipment such as respirators or work suits can increase heat stress.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

University Park Campus  
837 Downey Way, Stonier Hall 102B  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1143  
Tel: 213-740-6448

Health Sciences Campus  
1540 Alcazar St., CHP 148  
Los Angeles, CA 90033-9005  
Tel: 323-442-2200

<http://capsnet.usc.edu/ehs/>

EH&S Fact Sheets are intended for facilitating safety discussions in your department. Post the monthly topic on your departmental bulletin board.