



SUN SAFETY FOR ALL

PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM THE SUN ALL YEAR

DEAR EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL NURSES,

No matter the weather, the season, or your skin tone, it's always important to be sun safe! Help your students soak up sun protection knowledge with this free educational program from Neutrogena® SkinU and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired. The activities support health, STEM, and ELA lessons.

We hope that you will use the program and **share** it with other teachers. And please **tell us what you think** of the materials at [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-suncare](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/feedback-suncare). We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dominic Kinsley, PhD
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

TARGET AUDIENCE

Grades 6-8

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Available at [ymiclassroom.com/suncare](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/suncare):

- This teaching guide
- Four reproducible student activity sheets
- A classroom poster
- Activities for Grades 3-5
- A reproducible family take-home letter (English and Spanish)
- A standards chart
- An online feedback form

CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun health and safety • Electromagnetic radiation and waves • Energy • Weather | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading informational text • Critical thinking • Interpreting and analyzing real world data • Making healthy choices |
|---|---|

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

1. Photocopy the activity sheets for students and display the poster in your classroom.
2. Download the Bonus Guide for supplemental activities to extend the learning.
3. Download and send home copies of the family letter.
4. Review the EPA's UV Index website ([enviro.epa.gov/envirofacts/uv/search](https://www.enviro.epa.gov/envirofacts/uv/search)) prior to introducing it to students for Activity 1.
5. Know your school's policy on students having their own sunscreen in school.

WHY TEACH SUN SAFETY

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S., but it is largely preventable. Skin cancer is caused by UV light, which damages our DNA when it hits our skin. When the damage becomes too great, changes (mutations) develop in our skin cells which can develop into skin cancer. In fact, **just one blistering sunburn at a young age can double the chance of developing melanoma — the deadliest form of skin cancer — later in life.** That's why it is important to educate students about sun safety and help protect them from harmful UV rays.

GETTING STARTED

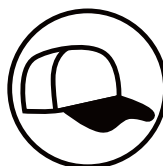
Set the stage for the activities by asking students the following:

- *What are some things we do to protect ourselves?* (Wear helmets, seat belts, life jackets, etc.)
- *Why should we all follow these practices?* (We all have to protect our bodies so that they can work properly; to prevent sickness)
- *What are some things we can do to protect our skin?* (Wear sunscreen, take care of cuts and scratches)
- *Why should we all protect our skin?* (Explain that skin is the body's largest organ. It protects our bodies, so we all need to take care of our skin so it can do its job.)

Ask students to share what they know about the sun. Next, explain that the sun emits energy including infrared radiation (heat), visible light, and ultraviolet light. All these kinds of energy travel in waves as parts of the electromagnetic spectrum. Electromagnetic waves are invisible except for the small portion of the spectrum we call visible light. But even the invisible parts of sunlight are powerful, and one part, ultraviolet (UV) light, can be very harmful. UV light rays can pass through Earth's protective atmosphere and damage our skin and eyes.



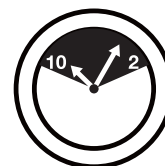
Protect eyes



Protect face



Wear sunscreen



Avoid intense sun



Cover skin



Questions? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.



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ACTIVITY 1: THE SUN: LIGHTS, WAVES, AND RAYS

Part 1: Distribute the activity sheet and have students read the passage. Then have them participate in a “Turn and Talk” with a neighbor, sharing one new fact they learned from the passage. Ask students to identify the helpful and harmful effects of the sun as described in the reading, and create examples of cause and effect.

To augment the reading, visit NASA’s *Introduction to the Electromagnetic Spectrum* at science.nasa.gov/ems/01_intro for a helpful video to screen for your class, along with more information on the topic for students to explore.

Part 2: Demonstrate how to find the EPA’s UV Index for your school’s zip code at enviro.epa.gov/envirofacts/uv/search using your smartboard or projector. Review the information to ensure that students associate the Index ratings with the corresponding protection messages.

Have students visit the National Weather Service website at weather.gov to track and record atmospheric conditions alongside the Index figures. Assign students to visit these websites daily throughout the week to report the UV Index and atmospheric conditions and have all students record the data on the table. Remind them to review the recommended actions in the sun protection messages each day, as this is an important element of the rating.

At the end of the week, discuss the data as a class. Ask students for additional questions that they might use to structure the summaries they are to write. For example: *What are we attempting to measure/monitor? What did the data say? What variables are measured?* Students should understand that even when it is cloudy, there is still UV ray exposure. Note: If you don’t experience variations in weather during the week, check back when the weather does change to compare the UV Index.

ACTIVITY 2: LOVE YOUR SKIN

Part 1: Distribute the activity sheet and have students research how UV rays are impacted by each factor.

Answers: The strength of UV rays depends on environmental and geographic factors. UV rays are strongest when they have less distance to travel. **The four seasons:** UV rays are strongest in the spring and summer when the sun is at a higher angle. **Elevation:** UV rays are stronger at higher elevations because they have less distance to travel.

Sun reflections: UV rays reflect off sand, water, and snow, bouncing back up at us. **Time of day:** UV rays are strongest midday when the sun is directly overhead.

Part 2: Students will assess scenarios and provide sun safe tips for each one. Once done, review the answers as a class. Emphasize the importance of wearing broad spectrum (UVA + UVB protection) sunscreen of at least SPF 30 and protecting ourselves from the sun’s UV rays all year.

Answers: Answers will vary. They should all include applying and reapplying sunscreen at least every two hours. After swimming or sweating you may need to apply more frequently. Other protective factors: wearing sunglasses, hats with visors, long sleeves, long pants, and seeking shade when appropriate, remembering that the sun’s rays are strongest between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If your shadow is shorter than you are, seek shade. The same sun safety precautions apply on a cloudy day.

Poster Activity: Using the list on this activity sheet, challenge students to find each of the sun safe practices on the poster.

BONUS ACTIVITY 1: A MESSAGE ABOUT SUN SAFETY

Set the stage for the activities with a “password” style sun safety game. Group students in two or more teams. Give one member of each team a sun safety-related word. Alternating between teams, these players give their teammates one-word clues until they guess the word. The team that guesses the most words wins. Sample words: sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, long-sleeve shirt, shade, tree, season, year, etc.

Next, explain to students that they are going to use their knowledge about sun safety to create a public service announcement (PSA). Explain that a PSA is a message to raise awareness or educate people about an important issue and encourage them to take action. PSAs may be commercials, social media campaigns, radio, billboard, or print ads, or text messages.

Distribute the activity sheet and review the directions with students. Have them work in pairs or small groups to create their sun safety PSAs. Guide students in selecting the medium for their PSAs and through the planning and drafting process.

Review all PSAs for appropriateness and safe, correct messaging. Then assist students in distributing, displaying, or presenting their PSAs in the school or community (class website, gallery walk, school assembly, etc.).

BONUS ACTIVITY 2: MAP THE UV INDEX

Explore the UV Index in diverse geographic locations to help reinforce the importance of practicing sun safety in all weather and locations — from coast to coast and valley to mountain peak.

Distribute the activity sheet and review the directions with students. Help them collect the UV Index data online and use the safety tips from the previous activities to create a sun safe weather report for each location.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Work with your school administrators to have students share the UV Index and sun safety tips during the school’s morning announcements
- Have students research historical UV Index data to determine if/how it has changed over time in your state.
 - *UV Index Annual Time Series* graphs yearly data and total days in each exposure category by state: cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/stratosphere/uv_index/uv_annual.shtml
 - *UV Index Monthly Mean* presents the 2006–2024 averages for the U.S. on a map view: cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/stratosphere/uv_index/uv_meanmax.shtml

THE SUN: LIGHTS, WAVES, AND RAYS



SUN SAFETY
FOR ALL

PART 1

Read the passage below and then identify at least one new fact that you learn. Write the fact on the back of this sheet.

*In the sun's core, nuclear fusion creates heat and light energy that moves from the sun's core to the surface where it spreads through space as **radiation**. This energy is important to life on Earth. It is the energy that enables us to grow food, which provides energy for our bodies. It is also the energy, converted to electricity, that we use to power everything from cars to digital devices. Plus, the sun's energy provides light.*

*The sun's energy consists of different kinds of radiation that form what we call the **electromagnetic spectrum**. Each kind of radiation on this spectrum has a different wavelength, from low frequency waves like radio waves to high frequency waves like X-rays. Low frequency waves are mostly harmless to humans, but high frequency waves can be harmful. Luckily for us, Earth's atmosphere blocks most high frequency waves, but the atmosphere does not block certain **ultraviolet (UV) rays**, which can cause harm.*

*Two types of harmful UV rays reach Earth — **UVA rays** (called aging rays) and **UVB rays** (called burning rays). Both types cause skin damage. In fact, just one blistering sunburn in childhood or adolescence can more than double the chance of developing melanoma, a serious skin cancer, later in life. And it's not just people with lighter skin that face this risk. Whatever your skin tone, UV rays can cause skin damage.*

*To help protect ourselves from harmful UV rays, it's important to practice **sun safety** like wearing sunscreen that is broad spectrum (UVA + UVB protection) and at least SPF 30, sunglasses, hats, and protective clothing, and limiting our time in the sun all year and in all weather, not just on sunny days.*

SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor, which measures how well the sunscreen can protect us from sunburn. The SPF number tells how much UVB light the sunscreen can block from our skin. It is based on how much longer it takes skin to start to burn without sunscreen. It is not related to how much time you can spend in the sun. The SPF number should be 30 or higher. Sunscreen can't protect us 100% from the sun's UV rays. That's why we need to take additional steps to help protect our skin.

PART 2

The UV Index tracks the ultraviolet ray level of the sun. It uses a scale of 1 to 11+ to predict how strong the UV rays will be each day and is a great tool for being sun smart. Visit enviro.epa.gov/envirofacts/uv/search to find the UV Index for your zip code and record it in the chart below every day for a week, along with the Sun Protection Message for each day. Then use the National Weather Service at weather.gov to record data on atmospheric conditions and temperature for each day.

At the end of the week, analyze your data to look for trends and patterns. Then write a summary. For example, do atmospheric conditions always align with index figures? Why or why not? If there is cloud coverage, how much UV exposure is still present?

Sun Safety Factor/Date					
• UV Index					
• Index Sun Protection Message					
• Atmospheric conditions					
• High Temperature (C/F)					
• Low Temperature (C/F)					

LOVE YOUR SKIN



SUN SAFETY FOR ALL

PART 1

Knowing that UV rays from the sun can damage skin and eyes, how do you protect yourself? You can't see or feel UV rays like you feel the heat from the sun on your skin, but they are there. On hot summer days and cold winter days, even on overcast or cloudy days — UV rays are there in all weather, all year, and affect everyone.

Research each topic below to determine how each sun exposure condition affects UV rays and their impact on our skin and eyes.

1. The four seasons: *When are UV rays the strongest? Why?*

2. Elevation: *Does altitude play a role in the strength of UV rays? Why or why not?*

3. Sun reflection on sand, water, snow: *What is the connection between reflections and UV rays?*

4. Time of day: *When are UV rays the strongest?*

PART 2

Read each scenario below. Using the information you researched for Part 1 and the list of sun safety actions in the sidebar, provide tips to help each person be sun smart as they prepare for their activity. Write your answers on the back of this sheet.

1. It's a breezy spring day, and Asher is getting ready to fly a kite.
2. It's a crisp, bright fall morning and it's harvest time. Gianna is helping her grandparents gather the vegetables.
3. It's a cloudy summer day. Mateo's older sister is home from college and is taking him to the rec center to swim for the afternoon.
4. Eva and her brother are heading outside after lunch to build a snowman — their town in the mountains got 10 inches of snow overnight.

SUN SAFETY TIPS!

Use these tips to help protect your skin and eyes!



1. Wear a sunscreen that is broad spectrum (UVA + UVB protection) and at least SPF 30 or more — even on cloudy days. Have a parent or caregiver apply sunscreen and reapply it every two hours, and after swimming or sweating.



2. Seek shade between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. Hint: If your shadow is shorter than you are, seek shade.



3. Wear clothing to cover your skin like long sleeves and long pants and accessories like sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat.

4. Check the UV Index with a grown-up.

5. Follow these tips around sand, snow, and water, too. They reflect the sun's rays.

A MESSAGE ABOUT SUN SAFETY



SUN SAFETY FOR ALL

Share what you've learned about sun safety with others by creating a public service announcement (PSA) to raise awareness about sun safety for all — all skin tones, all weather, all year. Use the prompts below to organize your thinking. Keep your message short and to the point and select content that will resonate with your intended audience.

1. Choose your target audience (circle one):

Younger students, peers, family members, or community members

2. Determine your call-to-action. Form your central idea and then condense it into a clear, simple call-to-action (what you want people to do).

PSA idea: _____

Call-to-action: _____

3. Research and identify supporting facts.

Sources: _____

Facts: _____

4. Think about your target audience. What do they need to know? What matters to them?

5. Choose a presentation format (circle one):

Poster, comic strip, video, audio recording, or another medium

6. Consider visual elements/sound effects. What images or sound effects will add impact to your message and capture the attention of your audience? Describe your approach.

7. Prepare your draft. Create a brief script that communicates your call-to-action. Make it memorable and check your facts. Then...

- For print: Write and illustrate your final draft.
- For audio and video: Film/record and edit your PSA (aim for a 30-second clip).

8. Share your final PSA. Work with your teacher to share your PSA with your class and to determine the best way to share it with your target audience.

SUN SAFETY TIPS!



Wear sunscreen.

Wear broad spectrum (UVA + UVB protection) at least SPF 30 or more – even on cloudy days. Have a parent or caregiver apply sunscreen and reapply it every two hours, and after swimming or sweating.



Protect eyes.

Wear sunglasses.



Protect face.

Wear a wide-brimmed hat.



Avoid intense sun.

Seek shade between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest.



Cover skin.

Wear clothing that covers your legs and arms.



MAP THE UV INDEX

 **SUN SAFETY
FOR ALL**

You’ve learned that invisible ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause sunburn and harm our eyes. The UV Index is a measure of the level of UV radiation and potential danger of sun exposure. It uses a scale of 1 to 11+ to predict how strong the UV rays will be each day. This helps us better prepare to protect ourselves, since a higher UV Index means a greater potential for damage to the skin and eyes, and less time needed for harm to occur.

PART 1

Look at the map below. Using what you know about geography and the UV Index, do you predict that the UV Index will be similar or different in these locations? Why?



PART 2

With your teacher or a grown-up, go to <https://enviro.epa.gov/envirofacts/uv/search>. Enter each location listed below in the box under “City & State” and click “Search.” Record the UV Index number and Exposure Category in the space under the location. Add your town to the chart.

Location	Denver, CO	New York, NY	Orlando, FL	Seattle, WA	St. Louis, MO	Your Town
Date						
UV Index Number						
Exposure Category						

PART 3

Imagine that you are in charge of creating a weather forecast for each location. What sun safety tips would you provide residents to help protect them from UV rays? Write the name of each location and your tips on the back of this sheet.