Protect yourself in 5 ways every day

Summer is in full swing and it’s a great time to remind residents about sun safety and the five S’s of summer slip, slop, slap, seek and slide.

Most of us know we should slip on sun-protective clothing, slop on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreens, slap on a broad-brimmed hat, seek shade during peak UV exposure times and slide on sunglasses.

Many of us are not following these simple sun protection methods each time we are outside.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr Ryan Livingston said summer was a peak time for irreversible sun damage.

“Protecting yourself isn’t just for when you’re hitting the beach. You can be exposed to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun through everyday activities like walking to the shop, waiting for the bus or hanging out washing. This exposure adds up and increases your risk of developing skin cancer.

“The Sunshine Coast has the country’s highest incidence of both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer. Queenslanders have the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Aussies diagnosed with skin cancer by age 70. Summer is a time to remind yourself of the importance of protecting yourself in 5 ways every day and early skin checks,” Dr Livingston said.

“In summer our UV index (available in newspapers and phone apps such as SunSmart for free) is extreme even from early in the morning and on cloudy days. The level of UVR can be high enough to damage your skin from as early as 7am,” he said.

Dr Livingston said SCHHS had introduced a RAPID Skin Clinic at Sunshine Coast University Hospital to meet the growing demand for patients with skin cancer.

“Our RAPID Skin Clinic allows skin cancer patients, where appropriate, to receive same-day treatment under local anaesthesia only.

“We are proud the RAPID Skin Clinic provides very high levels of cancer clearance rates and patient satisfaction, all right here on the coast. That said, the high community demand for the Skin Cancer surgery is saddening.

“We urge all Queenslanders to protect themselves, reducing your risk of skin cancer is easy but a cancer diagnosis is not,” he said.
Top tips for sun safety:
- slip on sun-protective clothing
- slop on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen
- slap on a broad-brimmed hat
- seek shade
- slide on sunglasses

More information

ENDS

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