

3 December 2014

## Festive season sun safety warning

Enjoying the outdoors with family and friends is a great way to spend the festive season, but experts are warning us to limit exposure during the peak time of the day when the sun is at its hottest.

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Director of Cancer Services, Professor Geoff Delaney said although fun in the sun was part of an Australian lifestyle, people needed to enjoy the sun responsibly.

“Australian culture involves a great deal of active outdoor activities, which is important for our health and wellbeing,” Professor Delaney said.

“However, everyone needs to remember that skin can burn with just a few minutes of exposure and damage can happen even before the skin starts to show any signs of burning.

“If possible, avoid exposing your skin to the sun from 11am to 3pm, by planning outdoor activities outside of these times.

“Melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, is the fourth most common cancer in NSW. An estimated 500 SWSLHD residents are diagnosed with melanoma each year,” he said.

Professor Delaney said there were five important steps people should take to protect their skin:

- **Shade**  
During daylight saving, the strength of UV radiation is highest from 11am to 3pm. The best thing you can do for your skin is to avoid the sun during this period and seek shade.
- **Protective clothing**  
Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible, especially your shoulders, arms and legs. The best forms of protective clothing are loose fitting, closely woven fabrics.
- **Broad-brimmed hat**  
A hat with a brim of at least 7cm is a great way to protect not only the top of your head but also your neck, ears and face - parts of the body where skin cancer often occurs.
- **Sunglasses**  
The most effective way to protect your eyes is to wear sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard AS 1067 and wrap around the sides of the face.
- **Sunscreen**  
Generously apply SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen to your skin, 20 minutes before you head outdoors. Remember to re-apply every two hours.

For more information visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)