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Keeping your family safe in the sun this summer

Frequent trips to the beach this summer could mean more than just fun in the sun according to Liverpool Cancer Services Director Eugene Moylan.

“While basking in the sun with family and friends can be a great way to spend your time off, we know that extended exposure to UV light can also cause skin cancer and premature aging,” Dr Moylan said.

Dr Moylan encouraged people of all ages to regularly apply sunscreen in order to enjoy the great outdoors and help prevent skin cancer.

“SPF30+ or SPF50+ labelled sunscreen should be applied on any area of skin that’s exposed to the sun, and then reapplied every two hours or after swimming, sweating or drying with a towel,” he said.

Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer and is the fourth most common cancer in the state. Dr Moylan said an estimated 500 SWSLHD residents are diagnosed with melanoma each year however this shouldn’t stop us from soaking up some sunshine.

“The sun isn’t all bad and helps our bodies produce vitamin D which is important to strong bones, teeth and a healthy immune system.

“A little sunlight can go a long way, even 10 minutes a day of sun exposure is plenty, especially if you’re fair-skinned,” he said.

Dr Moylan 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.