Environment and Climate Change Canada | Environnement et Changement climatique Canada

Canada

The UV Index

Environment and Climate Change Canada developed the UV Index to inform Canadians about the strength of the sun's UV (ultraviolet) rays. UV rays can cause sunburns, eye cataracts, skin aging and skin cancer. The higher the UV Index number, the stronger the sun's rays, and the greater the need to take precautions.

The table below outlines the sun protection actions recommended at different levels of the UV Index.

Environment and Climate Change Canada's UV Index

UV Index	Description	Sun Protection Actions
0–2	Low	• **Minimal sun protection required** for normal activity. • Wear sunglasses on bright days. If outside for more than one hour, cover up and use sunscreen. • Reflection off snow can nearly double UV strength. Wear sunglasses and apply sunscreen.
3–5	Moderate	• **Take precautions –** cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen – especially if you will be outside for 30 minutes or more. • Look for shade near midday when the sun is strongest.
6–7	High	• **Protection required –** UV damages the skin and can cause sunburn. • Reduce time in the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., and take full precautions – seek shade, cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
8–10	Very High	• **Extra precautions required –** unprotected skin will be damaged and can burn quickly. • Avoid the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., and take full precautions – seek shade, cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
11+	Extreme	• **Take full precautions.** Unprotected skin will be damaged and can burn in minutes. Avoid the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. • White sand and other bright surfaces reflect UV and increase UV exposure. • Values of 11 or more are very rare in Canada. However, the UV Index can reach 14 or more in the tropics and southern U.S.

PROTECT YOUR SKIN

When the UV Index is 3 or higher, protect your skin as much as possible. In general, the UV Index in Canada can be 3 or higher from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. between April and September, even when it's cloudy.

- Seek shade or bring your own (e.g., an umbrella).
- Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible and a wide-brimmed hat
- Wear sunglasses or eyeglasses with UV protective lenses.
- Use sunscreen labelled "broad spectrum" and "water resistant" with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Apply sunscreen generously and reapply often.
- Avoid getting a sunburn and avoid intentional tanning.
- Listen for Environment and Climate change Canada's UV Index – it's included in your local weather forecast whenever it is forecast to reach 3 (moderate) or more that day.

UV information: www.ec.gc.ca/UV

Weather forecasts: weather.gc.ca

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