OCTOBER

Division of Environmental Services

Safety Message

...from the Division Chief

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation can result in damage done to skin cells and can cause premature aging of the skin, wrinkles, cataracts, and skin cancer. The main source of UV radiation comes from direct sunlight and working outdoors means you are at a greater risk of developing these types of conditions.

There are three main types of UV rays - UVA, UVB, and UVC rays, but only the first two pose a threat to us. UVA rays cause tanning, wrinkling, and aging whereas UVB rays have greater effects. UVB rays are responsible for causing sunburns and can ultimately result in damage done to the DNA of skin cells. This type of UV ray is of greatest concern because it is known to play a crucial role in the development of skin cancer.

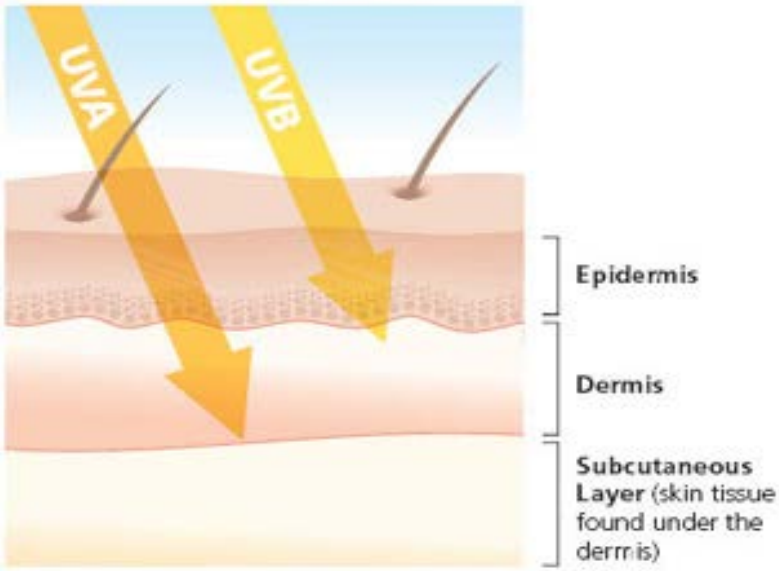
There are also many factors influencing the intensity of UV radiation. During the course of a year, UV rays are the strongest between April and October during the hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is important to take caution even on cloudy days, as UV rays can still get through the cloud cover, and be cognizant of reflective surfaces such as water, sand, pavement, grass, etc. because they can strengthen the effects of UV radiation.

If you experience prolonged exposure to UV rays, be sure to check unprotected areas regularly for signs of skin damage and always make an effort to protect yourself in sunny weather.

Sincerely,

Dean Messer, Chief
Division of Environmental Services

UV Radiation and the Skin



UV damage can often take the form of:

- pale, waxy nodules
- red and scaly patches
- sores that don't heal
- mole-like growths

...and *always* keep an eye out for skin spots that change in size, shape, or color.

How can I protect myself?

Wear protective clothing that consists of non-see-through fabric.

Use sunscreen of at least SPF 15 to block 93% of UV rays.

Wear UV-absorbent sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat to protect eyes, head, neck, and shoulders.

Limit exposure during peak hours of sunlight when you are most susceptible.

Think Safety visit http://dessafety.water.ca.gov; http://swpsafety.water.ca.gov for more information.
Send Safety suggestions to: dessafety@water.ca.gov.