

Winter Sunburn

March 2009

Quarter 1

Coat, boots, hat, gloves, scarf, sunscreen. Sunscreen?

I'd bet sunscreen isn't the norm when preparing to bear the outdoor elements. And, you probably think that sunburn only occurs during the warmer months or when the sun is at its harshest. Think Again!

Even in the winter, when it's overcast, and during shady situations, Ultra Violet Radiation (UVR) can be more than enough to cause skin damage. And, although UVR is less intense during the winter months, typically people spend more time in direct sunlight because the temperatures are lower. Your altitude and environment play a part in your exposure as well. Higher altitudes can increase your UVR exposure and being on any water surface (frozen or not) can double your exposure because of the sun's reflection.

Now that you know what your risks are, what can you do limit your exposure?

Protection is key! Did you know that many cases of skin cancer are found on the head, neck and ears - areas that can be exposed to UVR more often than not because protecting these areas are forgotten. Not only should you protect your skin with clothing (hat, gloves, scarf), but you should also protect yourself by using sunscreen with Sun Protection Factor (SPF). So, what is SPF? An SPF determines how much time you can spend in the sun without burning while wearing sunscreen, as opposed to not wearing any sunscreen. For example, if your skin usually burns in 10 minutes (without any type of sun protection), then an SPF of 15 means that you can stay in the sun 15 times longer ($10 \times 15 = 150$ minutes) until you begin to burn. But remember, in order to get the full protection from sunscreen, you MUST reapply!

Coat, boots, hat, gloves, scarf, sunscreen...now that doesn't sound so strange after all.

We understand the value of preventative measures. If you would like more information regarding Winter Weather Safety please don't hesitate to contact me at TMW@TelcomInsGrp.com and if you are a policyholder and would like more samples for your own safety meeting, just let me know.

Do you know the difference between UVA and UVB Rays? If not, here's a good way to remember.

UVA = Aging. UVA rays are a smaller wavelength which can penetrate and damage the cell. UVA rays damages skin cells and have the potential to cause cell mutation.

UVB = Burning. UVB rays are a larger wavelength and easily burn the surface of the skin.



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