



**MEDIA REQUESTS:**  
Janenne Irene Pung, PIO  
231-547-7653  
[Media@nwhealth.org](mailto:Media@nwhealth.org)  
[www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org)

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**Health Department of Northwest Michigan**

### **Protect Yourself from UV Exposure**

*Enjoy the summer sunshine without increasing risks for skin cancer*

A highlight of summer in northwest Michigan is enjoying the warmth of the sunshine. There are ways to take in that warmth while also taking safety precautions against sun damage from ultraviolet (UV) rays.

According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types. Did you know that there are two types of UV rays that can damage your skin?

- UV-B rays have short wavelengths that reach the outer layer of your skin.
- UV-A rays have longer wavelengths that can penetrate the middle layer of your skin.
- Ultraviolet rays are a type of electromagnetic radiation.
- The main way people are exposed to these rays is through sunlight.

July is UV Safety Awareness Month, and the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) would like to share these reminders of how to guard against exposure to UV rays – for children and adults.

“Unprotected sun exposure can cause vision problems and damage to your eyes. It causes premature skin aging and skin cancer,” said Dr. Joshua Meyerson, HDNW Medical Director. “Many people plan for applying sunscreen to their children but may not protect themselves. We all benefit from family-wide safety.”

Here are some tips from the American Cancer Society on how to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- Wear lightweight clothing, sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses. Manufacturers are even making clothing with UV protection in the fabrics.
- Seek shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) liberally and often. One hour in the sun while wearing SPF 30 sunscreen is the same as spending two minutes totally unprotected.
- Avoid tanning beds and sun lamps.

Enjoy the outdoors and all the health benefits fresh air and increased activities offer. Just take a few moments to plan on how to cover up and limit your exposure to UV rays.

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*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*