



## 1. What is ultraviolet radiation and where can I find it?

Ultraviolet radiation (UV rays) is a type of energy released by the sun onto the earth's surface. There are three types of UV rays: ultraviolet A (UVA), ultraviolet B (UVB), and ultraviolet C (UVC). UVA and UVB rays pass through the earth's atmosphere and can cause serious health problems. UVC rays are absorbed by gases in the atmosphere and do not reach the earth's surface.

## 2. How might I be exposed to ultraviolet radiation?

Most UV radiation exposure comes from natural sunlight. The intensity of UVA and UVB rays depends on many factors such as landscape, cloud cover, altitude, time of day, and seasons. Artificial sources of UV radiation include tanning equipment, welding equipment, lasers and certain lamps.

## 3. How can ultraviolet radiation affect my health?

UVA rays penetrate deep into the skin, leading to premature aging of the skin. UVB rays mostly affect the surface of skin, causing sunburns and skin damage. Continued exposure to UVA and UVB rays can lead to skin cancers, cataracts and other eye problems.

## 4. How can I reduce my exposure to ultraviolet radiation?

- Limit time in the sun and stay in the shade when UV rays are the strongest, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- When outdoors, wear a hat, sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection, and tightly woven, loose-fitting clothing.
- Apply sunscreen every time you go outside. Look for labels that say "broad-spectrum" protection. Re-apply every two hours or after working, swimming, playing or exercising outdoors.
- Do not use tanning beds. When tanning outdoors, use extra caution.

### Sources

1. *Ultraviolet Radiation*. L.A. County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh>
2. *Protect Yourself from the Sun*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://cdc.gov/Environmental>
3. *SunWise*. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <http://epa.gov/sunwise>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website:  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.