

If the UV is below 3, get some sun for vitamin D!



A healthy balance of ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels.

The sun's UV can damage skin and eyes when it reaches three and above. In Victoria average UV levels are three and above from September to the end of April. That's when it's important to use the 5 sun protection steps: *Slip! Slop! Slap! Seek! and Slide!*

From May to August in Victoria, average UV levels are below three. That's when it's time to swap the five sun protection steps for the vitamin D stocktake!

You can find out the daily UV level for your area by checking the SunSmart UV Alert. It indicates when UV levels are going to be three and above so you know when you need to use

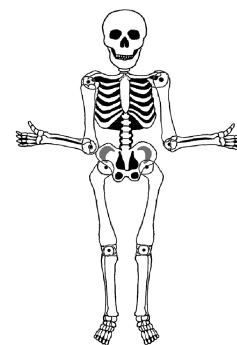


sun protection. It also shows the times of the day UV levels will be below three so you know when it's safe to get some sun for vitamin D.

The SunSmart UV Alert is available in the weather section of the newspaper, at sunsmart.com.au or as a free iPhone app.

The ultimate 'D'fence against low vitamin D

Vitamin D is needed for the development and maintenance of healthy bones and muscles and it is also important for general health. The sun is the best natural source of vitamin D.



Some foods, such as oily fish and eggs, contain small amounts of vitamin D, while margarine and some types of milk have added vitamin D. Food, however, only makes a small contribution to the body's overall vitamin D levels and it is difficult to get enough from diet alone. People can also get vitamin D from supplements.

From May to the end of August in Victoria, do you and your family check the SunSmart UV Alert to see what the UV levels are each day?

If the UV level is below three:

- Do you pack your sun protection gear away only using it for trips to the snow or alpine regions or if staying outdoors for long periods?
- Do you have access to sunny outdoor areas?
- If you have fair to olive skin, do you get about two to three hours of sun exposure to the face, arms and hands (or equivalent area of skin) across the week? Make that 3–6 times this level for families with naturally very dark skin.

If you answered yes to all of these, you are defending your body against low vitamin D levels.

If you are concerned about your family's vitamin D levels, check with your doctor.

For further information visit sunsmart.com.au or call 13 11 20.

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