

# Protect your farm's most important asset. You.

## If you work outside you are at risk

Two out of every three Australians will get skin cancer before the age of 70, leading to almost 1900 deaths each year. In Victoria, around 400 people will lose their lives to skin cancer each year.

### The good news is most skin cancers can be prevented.

Almost all skin cancer is caused by over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Exposure to the sun's UV radiation is a major hazard for anybody who spends long periods of time outdoors.

## Know the enemy



**Basal cell carcinoma**  
This is the most common type of skin cancer. It usually occurs on the upper body. These cancers are often red and slightly raised with a scaly area, which can bleed if knocked. They often become ulcerated as they develop.



**Squamous cell carcinoma**  
These skin cancers are more dangerous than the basal cell carcinomas, as they spread throughout the body. They require treatment and can cause ulcers and are often red in colour.



**Melanoma**  
These skin cancers are the most dangerous. Melanoma spreads throughout the body and if left untreated can lead to death. They often start as a mole and become darker and have an irregular border.

## Skin cancer – what to look for

Early detection of skin cancer is important as it can often be successfully treated if found early. Get to know your skin – what is normal for you and what has changed since the last time you looked.

- Check your whole body: the soles of your feet, between your toes, armpits, ears, eyelids, under your fingernails and scalp.
- Use a hand-held mirror or ask someone to check areas you cannot see such as your back, the back of your neck and legs.
- Look for a new spot or a spot that is different from the ones around it.
- Look for a sore that doesn't heal.
- Look for a spot or mole that has changed in size, shape or colour.

Consult your doctor immediately if you notice anything unusual.

## Your sun protection program

If you're an employer you have a legal responsibility to provide a safe working environment. This includes supplying sun protection to your workers if they have to work outside. And under the legislation, workers are required to co-operate.

Sun protection is important not just when you are working on the farm, but also when you are on holidays or just enjoying time outside. In Victoria, UV Index levels average 3 and above from the beginning of September until the end of April. At that time, you and your family should wear sun-protective clothing, use sunscreen, wear a hat and sunglasses, and seek shade.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
For vitamin D, most people only need a few minutes of mid-morning or mid-afternoon sun each day from September to April, and 2 to 3 hours of midday winter sun, each week from May to August.

## Protect yourself from the sun's UV radiation

Check the SunSmart UV Alert each day at [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au) or on the free SunSmart app. When sun protection times are issued, or if you are going to be outdoors for extended periods, use a combination of these 5 sun protection measures:



**1. SLIP ON SUN-PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**  
Cover as much skin as possible. Long pants and shirts with a collar and long sleeves are best.



**4. SEEK SHADE**  
Take breaks under trees or indoors whenever possible.



**2. SLOP ON SPF 30+ SUNSCREEN**  
It's best to use a broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen. Apply 20 minutes before going outdoors and re-apply every two hours.



**5. SLIDE ON SUNGLASSES**  
Wear close fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard.



**3. SLAP ON A HAT**  
Wear a broad-brimmed hat that provides as much shade as possible to your face, neck and ears.

These steps provide the best protection against UV radiation when used together.

PATIENT HISTORY



## Karl's story

### Sure it may not happen to you. Just don't bet the farm on it.

At just age 35, with four young children, Karl was diagnosed with stage 3 melanoma and had to undergo surgery to remove the cancerous lump in his neck and his lymph nodes.

He had found it less than three weeks earlier while working on his family's sheep and cropping farm.

"I always wore sunscreen and a big hat and I didn't walk around in a singlet and shorts, so it can happen to anyone," he said.

Karl then endured a year of drug treatment, which gave him headaches, mood swings and meant he spent up to 18 hours a day sleeping.

"My father works on the farm and we have a full-time worker, but we got extra help in to do crutching and mulesing and things we usually do ourselves," he said.

"My energy levels are now back to normal but it's changed the way we do things," he said. "We've got a canopy over the four-wheeler, and if it's a day of extreme UV, I do office work."

Karl's wife, Bryony, said he also "makes more time to do those little things with the kids."

"He's realised that all the jobs on the farm don't have to be finished yesterday," Bryony said.

His message to the rural community is simple "protect yourself and, if you feel something different, see someone about it."

**Karl Price**  
Cavendish, VIC

Photograph by Karla Northcott



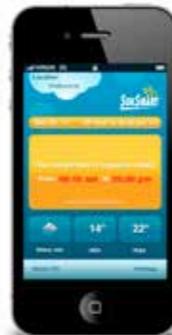
**farm**

### Can you afford to take unexpected time off?

If you're a farmer or work outdoors, you have a higher risk of skin cancer. Treatments for skin cancer vary depending on the type of cancer, as well as how early it is detected. Not all skin cancers can be burnt off, cut out or treated with creams. Melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, can require surgery, radiotherapy and/or chemotherapy. This may mean time off work, away from your farm and away from your family.

### SunSmart UV Alert

You can be burnt even on cool or cloudy days, so don't rely on temperature forecasts to determine when to use sun protection. Check the SunSmart UV Alert for daily sun protection times on the free SunSmart app, online at [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au), in the weather section of newspapers or as a free widget for websites.



Remember that if you're outside for extended periods of time, in alpine areas, or near highly reflective surfaces such as snow, you'll still need to protect yourself at all times.

### Vitamin D

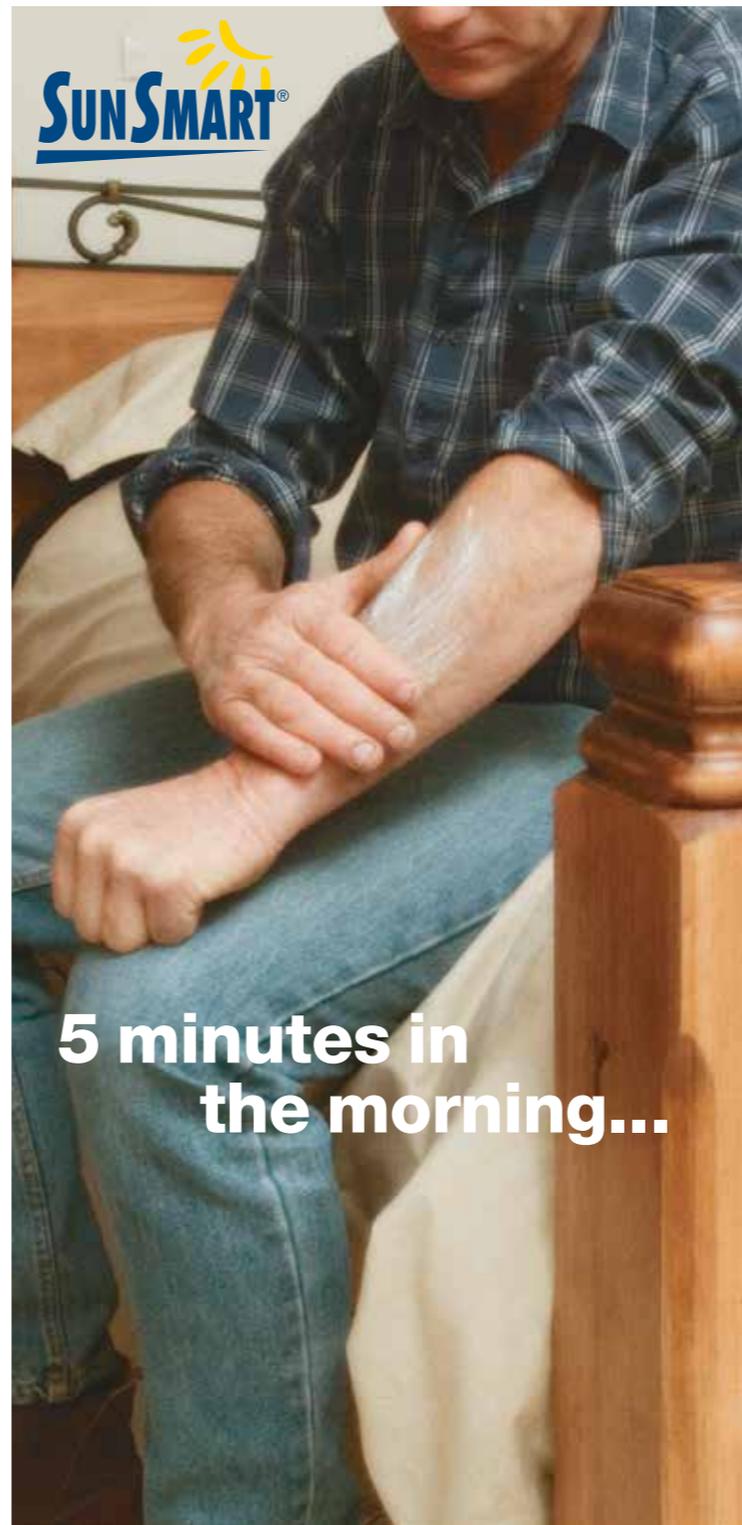
The sun's UV radiation is both a major cause of skin cancer and a great natural source of vitamin D. We need to balance the risk of skin cancer from too much sun exposure with maintaining adequate vitamin D levels.

For vitamin D, from September to April most people with fair to olive skin only need a few minutes of mid-morning or mid-afternoon sun exposure to their face, arms and hands or equivalent area each day. From May to August, the recommendations are 2 to 3 hours of midday winter sun each week. People with naturally dark skin may need 3 to 6 times more exposure to help with vitamin D.

Visit [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au) or call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.



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**5 minutes in  
the morning...**



**...or 5 months  
off the**