

Sun starved Brits to risk health this summer

29 April 2013



Following some of the coldest and wettest weather on record, around 4.9 million people in the UK (10 per cent) are more likely to risk scorching themselves in strong sun in an attempt to get a tan this summer, a survey by Cancer Research UK and NIVEA SUN reveals today.

People are so desperate for some sunshine that 44 per cent of those planning to travel abroad this summer say a good reason for leaving the country is to spend time somewhere sunny after the dismal weather in the UK. A third of those travelling abroad (31 per cent) said getting a tan was one of the reasons.

And regardless of where they spend their summer, around 7.2 million people (14 per cent) say they are more determined to try to get tanned because of the [bad weather](#) in the UK over the last year.

The YouGov survey, which asked more than 4,100 UK adults (aged 18+) about their holiday plans and sun habits, was commissioned by Cancer Research UK and NIVEA SUN to highlight the importance of enjoying the sun safely.

The research also shows that although 87 per cent of people are aware that too much [sun exposure](#) is the main cause of [skin cancer](#), some still aren't taking the necessary precautions to avoid sunburn and enjoy the sun safely. Only 65 per cent plan to use sunscreen of at least factor 15 this summer and only 36 per cent say they always spend some

time in the shade when they are abroad and in strong sun.

The number of people being diagnosed with skin cancer has risen dramatically since the 1970s, and [malignant melanoma](#) is now the 5th most common cancer in the UK (2010).

Yinka Ebo, Cancer Research UK senior health information officer, said: "We know it's been tough getting through the long winter, especially when last summer was such a wash out. But it's still important to avoid getting sunburnt when it finally makes an appearance. We all need some sun to make [vitamin D](#) for healthy bones, but overexposure to the sun's rays can cause sunburn, which is a sign that the DNA in your skin cells has been damaged. Not only can this cause premature ageing and wrinkles it increases the risk of skin cancer.

"That's why we've teamed up with NIVEA SUN to encourage people to enjoy the sun safely this summer. Whether home or abroad, when the sun is strong, it's important to use a combination of shade, clothing and at least SPF 15 sunscreen to protect yourself and your family."

Cancer Research UK and NIVEA SUN are working together again this year to encourage people to enjoy the sun safely with three top tips:

- **Spend time in the shade if your shadow is shorter than you.** If your shadow is shorter than you are, then the sun is strong. During the UK [summer](#), the sun is at its strongest between 11am and 3pm
- **Wear a hat, t-shirt and sunglasses when the sun is strong.** Wide brimmed hats or foreign legion style caps are best
- **Cancer Research UK recommends you use at least factor 15 sunscreen with a high star rating when the sun is strong.** Apply sunscreen generously and reapply regularly to make sure you get the level of protection on the bottle.

The partnership launched in July 2012, and aims to raise millions of pounds for Cancer Research UK's vital skin cancer research over three years.

As well as fundraising for the charity, NIVEA SUN will be working with Cancer Research UK to promote key sun safety messaging through an advertising campaign which will highlight simple tips that people can follow to enjoy the sun safely.

Graham Taylor at NIVEA SUN said: "We're incredibly proud to be supporting Cancer Research UK again this year. We all need a bit of [sun](#) to keep us happy and healthy, but the important thing is to enjoy it responsibly and safely."

More information: For more sun safety information from Cancer Research UK visit www.sunsmart.org.uk

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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