

# Public urged to protect their skin during warm weather



## Pharmacists provide some helpful tips on staying sun safe

With the return of the warm weather the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) is urging people to enjoy the sun responsibly. Pharmacists are also advising parents to be sun smart and protect their children's skin when they are outside enjoying the fine weather, as children's skin is very sensitive to the sun's rays.

Community pharmacist, Tomas Conefrey said, "Many of us will be heading abroad or going on a staycation this summer to take full advantage of the hot weather. We should all be taking some common-sense steps to make sure that we do not over expose ourselves to the sun. It is really important that everyone enjoys the warm weather responsibly and to visit their local pharmacy for advice on how to best protect themselves from the sun.

Mr Conefrey provided the following advice to enjoy the sun safely:

- **Sun cream:** Apply sun cream liberally 20 minutes before going outdoors making sure to cover those areas often forgotten, your neck, ears, nose and feet. Reapply at least every two hours. You should also wear a lip balm with an SPF of at least 30.

- **Wear protective clothing:** Consider wearing a hat, particularly if you have thin or thinning hair. Wear sunglasses that provide UVA and UVB protection.
- **Check the UV Index:** Throughout the summer Met Eireann will issue its UV index so you can know how strong the sun will be. This is important as the sun can be strong even if it is not too warm, particularly on windy days. When the UV Index is 3 or more you are at greater risk of skin damage that can lead to skin cancer.
- **Limit time in the peak of the sun:** In Ireland during the summer the sun will be strongest from 11am until 3pm. Try to avoid spending too long outdoors during this time.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water and remember that both alcohol and caffeine can cause dehydration. Take over-the-counter rehydration salts if you feel any signs of dehydration.
- **Treat sun burn:** Even the most careful of us can suffer sun burn on occasion and it is important to treat this early to minimise damage. First ensure you prevent any further exposure to the sun. Then visit your pharmacy who can advise on the appropriate treatment.
- **Protect Children:** The Irish Cancer Society state that research tells us that getting sunburnt in childhood or adolescence can increase the risk of melanoma—the most serious form of skin cancer—in later life. Children should always wear sun cream when outdoors and it is important to cover their skin and use shade throughout the day to limit prolonged exposure.