

3 January 2024

## Be a shady type these Summer holidays!

With thousands of families enjoying their summer holidays during January, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) is urging all Australians to “be a shady type” and protect themselves from the sun wherever possible.

“Slapping on the sunscreen, wearing a hat, and staying in the shade wherever you can – particularly during the middle of the day – is the best way to avoid skin damage and potentially deadly skin cancers in the future” **RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski, said.**



“Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia...and the main cause is the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

“Excessive UV exposure can also cause premature ageing of the skin as well as eye damage.

“Even on an overcast or cloudy day, UV rays can still be strong – so make sure you are taking all the precautions against sunburn and other sun damage that you can, whatever type of weather you are heading out into.

“Keep in mind, too, that sun damage can occur very quickly – you don’t need to be out in the sun all day to sustain damaging sunburn or eye damage.”

### **The best way to avoid skin and eye damage due to UV radiation is to:**

- Wear clothing that covers as much of the skin as possible.
- Slap on SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen – apply a generous amount of sunscreen to clean, dry skin at least 20 minutes before you go outside. Reapply sunscreen every two hours or after swimming or excessive sweating. Remember too that sunscreen should be used with other sun protection measures – it can’t do it all on its own!
- Slap on a hat – a broad-brimmed hat which shades your face, nose, neck and ears is best.
- Make sure you stay in the shade wherever possible – by using trees, built structures or (in the case of the beach) a sunshade tent.
- Wear sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard AS/NSZ 1067 to protect your eyes.

“It’s important to have fun on your summer holidays, and enjoy the great weather that we have in Australia this time of year” **Dr Lewandowski said.**

“But being a shady character now will really help you stay out of trouble in the future...skin trouble, at least!”

**Dr Lewandowski added that it is important to check your skin regularly for any new spots or changes in shape, colour or size of existing spots...and if you notice anything unusual, see your doctor as soon as possible.**

“The good news is that most skin cancer can be successfully treated if it is found early...but of course, it is way better to avoid skin damage in the first place – by being a shady type, staying out of the sun and protecting yourself from UV rays.”

**Find more information about being SunSmart here:**

<https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart>

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**A high resolution photo of Dr RT Lewandowski is [available here.](#)**

**Available for interview:**

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