



Washington, DC

Earth Gauge: UV-Aware

July is UV Awareness Month! Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun causes sunburn and other health effects, including skin cancer and cataracts. Everyone should protect themselves from the sun, and some groups can be particularly susceptible to health effects from sun exposure:

- Kids: About 25 percent of a person's lifetime exposure to UV radiation occurs before the age of 18, meaning that it is especially important to protect children - who may not know how to properly protect themselves - from sun exposure.
- Gardeners and Farmers: The National Gardening Association found that the average gardener spends 2.8 hours per week in the garden. Because they spend lots of time outside, gardeners and farmers can be more at-risk for skin cancer.
- Older Individuals: Older people's skin cells are less able to repair DNA damage caused by exposure to the sun. There is also evidence that UV-B radiation from the sun puts older people at increased risk of developing cataracts.

Viewer Tip: When possible, work and play outside during the cooler parts of the day - before 10:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. - and remember that it is possible to burn on a cloudy day, even when the sun doesn't seem bright. Use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 that provides protection from both UVA and UVB rays. Apply sunscreen liberally and often, and wear protective clothing - hat, sunglasses, long-sleeved shirt, and pants.

*(Sources: The Skin Cancer Foundation. "Sage Advice." <http://www.skincancer.org/sunscreen/sage-advice.html>; Fosdick, Dean (Associated Press), July 9, 2008. "A Growing Problem." *The Washington Post Express*; U.S. EPA Aging Initiative. "UV Radiation and Health Effects." <http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/climatechange/uv-radiation.htm>; U.S. EPA Office of Air and Radiation. September 2006. "The Sun, UV, and You: A Guide to Sunwise Behavior." <http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/doc/sunuvu.pdf>)*

Climate Fact: Higher Lows

Getting a break from exposure to hot temperatures is important for preventing heat related illnesses. While people usually associate extreme daytime temperatures with heat stroke, if it does not cool sufficiently during the night, the body will not get a break from the heat. In North America over the last 50 years, average nighttime low temperatures have risen faster than average daytime high temperatures. There has been a 50 percent increase in the number of unusually warm nights, and nights with temperatures that would have fallen into the top tenth percentile during the 1950's now fall into the top fifteenth percentile. Almost all of this increase has happened since 1975.

(Source: United States. Climate Change Science Program. Weather and Climate Extremes in a Changing Climate. Synthesis Assessment Product 3.3: GPO. 2008.)

Climate in the News – "Climate Change Brings Jellyfish Plague to Europe's Beaches ." – *Deutsche Welle*, July 5, 2008 - <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3460949,00.html>

Warming waters, which have lengthened jellyfish reproductive cycles, and overfishing have allowed jellyfish populations to increase along Europe's coastlines.

Earth Gauge is funded by the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation, the Doll Family Foundation, the Kendeda Foundation, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, NOAA Office of Education, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds. The Earth Gauge newsletter was developed under Cooperative Agreement No. X783185101-0 awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA made comments and suggestions on the document intended to improve the scientific analysis and technical accuracy of the document. However, the views expressed in this document are those of NEETF, and EPA does not endorse any products or commercial services mentioned in this publication. Any use of information from Earth Gauge in television, radio or other forms of media are subject to these same limitations.