**Civil Air Patrol health & wellness briefings: Sunburn**

Enjoying leisure activities outside in the summer can be fun. The energy radiating from the sun makes it possible – and carries the risk of too much solar radiation.

Overdoing it and failing to properly protect yourself can result in painful sunburn and an increased risk of skin damage and cancer.

Who is at risk for sunburn?

* Higher risk for individuals with pale skin
* Blue eyes
* Red or blonde hair
* Certain medications
  + Ciproflaxin
  + Tetracyclines
  + Sulfa drugs
  + Some antidepressants
  + Some blood pressure medications
  + Some diuretics
  + Saint John's Wart

What happens?

* Skin can tolerate sun for 10 – 15 minutes before damage begins
* Once your exposure becomes excessive, your skin will become red in 3-5 hours
* The visible evidence of sunburn peaks at 12-24 hours
* Resolves in 3-7 days
* Tan develops about 5 days after exposure
* If blisters form
  + Gently wash with soap and water, and apply an over the counter antibiotic ointment if blisters open.
  + Over the counter Non-steroidal medication (ibuprofen, naproxen) may be useful for pain
  + Over the counter topical hydrocortisone can also help.

Prevention of sunburn

* Use a sunscreen with an SPF (skin protective factor) of at least 30. The higher the rating, the more protection.
* Reapply if it is washed off in the water or by sweating
* Avoid sunning during the peak hours of 10:00 - 2:00
* Wear a hat and protective clothing, don’t forget your feet and ears
* Around the water consider the enhanced effect of radiation from the water
* Wear sunglasses

Risks of repeated sunburn

* Precancerous lesions like actinic and seborrheic keratoses.
* Skin cancers
  + Basal cell carcinoma
  + Squamous cell carcinoma
  + Malignant melanoma