

FIRST AID CARE FOR SUNBURNS

When sun protection routines are overlooked—especially during outdoor work—sunburns can occur, causing discomfort and potentially leading to more serious health issues.

If you're spending long hours in the sun, it's important to take care of yourself by regularly applying sunscreen, wearing protective clothing and taking breaks in shaded areas.

A few simple steps can make a big difference in staying safe and comfortable on the job.

STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE SUNBURN PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

- **RECOGNIZING A SUNBURN**
- **IMMEDIATE FIRST AID TREATMENT**
- **FURTHER CARE AND PREVENTION**



BC Forest Safety

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RECOGNIZING SUNBURN: Sunburn is the result of the skin being overexposed to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun. It typically shows up as red, painful skin that feels hot to the touch. In more serious cases, there may be blisters, swelling and flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, nausea and headache.

Common Signs of Sunburn

- Red, irritated skin
- Pain and/or tenderness
- Swelling
- Blisters
- Peeling skin
- Fever and chills (in more severe cases)
- Nausea and headache (in more severe cases)

IMMEDIATE FIRST AID: If you or someone else gets sunburned, follow these steps:

- **Get Out of the Sun** - Move to a shaded or indoor area to stop further UV exposure.
- **Cool the Skin** - Gently rinse the affected area with cool water (not cold) or take a cool bath. Avoid using soap, which can irritate the skin. Avoid ice, which can cause frostbite.
- **Stay Hydrated** - Drink plenty of water, juice or electrolyte drinks to prevent dehydration to help your body recover.
- **Soothe the Skin** - After cooling, apply a gentle moisturizer or aloe vera gel to soothe the skin. Avoid using products with alcohol, which can dry out the skin.
- **Manage Pain** - Over-the-counter pain relief medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen can help reduce inflammation and alleviate pain. Always follow the dosage instructions.

FURTHER CARE AND PREVENTION: Sunburns can be more serious than they seem. Here are some tips on how to manage sunburn care and prevent future occurrences:

- **Watch for Severe Symptoms:** If you experience fever, chills or nausea (this may indicate heat stress) or if your skin has extensive or large blistering, or if the sunburn covers a large area of the body (more than 5% of the body surface area) seek medical attention. And look for signs of infection in the days that follow.
- **Protect from Further Sun Exposure** - Stay out of the sun until the sunburn has healed. If you must be in the sun, wear protective clothing, apply sunscreen (SPF30 or more) and wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- **Keep Hydrated and Moisturized:** Continue drinking fluids and applying moisturizer to help your skin recover and reduce peeling.
- **Practice Sun Safety:** Prevent future sunburns by applying sunscreen regularly, wearing hats and long sleeves, and avoiding peak sun hours when possible.

REMEMBER:

Take care of sunburns quickly and stick to a daily sun safety routine to reduce sunburn risk. Prevention is always better than treatment to stay safe from harmful UV rays.



WorkSafeBC Video: Sun Safety at Work for Workers

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