

Staying safe in the summer sun

Our high temperatures in the last week is a good reminder that summer is well underway! While that means more time for relaxation, the outdoors, and our loved ones, for those of us in the desert there's also the need for precautions in the extreme heat. While a certain amount of time in the sun can give you a healthy, and natural, boost of Vitamin D, don't forget that overexposure can be very damaging — both in the short-term risks like sunburn, as well as more long-term damage.

Sun safety is very important to me - I burn easily and was diagnosed with Melanoma in my early 20s but fortunately caught it early enough and have not had any long term issues. Research shows that more than 40 percent of cancers, including those that affect the skin, can be linked to lifestyle. A few simple steps I take to protect myself is wear sunblock every day (even in the winter) and I try to wear a hat if I am going to be out in the sun for a while, as well as regularly see a dermatologist. With July being UV Safety Awareness Month, it's a perfect time to remind ourselves about taking the precautions needed to keep our skin protected and decrease our risk for skin cancer.

The American Cancer Society has some great info on how to choose a sunblock, covering up, how to limit sun exposure and information on skin cancer (<https://www.cancer.org/healthy/be-safe-in-sun.html>). The site even has a Sun Safety Quiz to help us think about sun safety and what we are doing to protect ourselves. The American Cancer Society also partners with communities across the country to bring awareness and education to all types of cancer. Ridgecrest is lucky to still have a local Relay for Life event that allows our community to come together and celebrate survivors of cancer, bring awareness, and raise funds to help fight cancer. Ridgecrest Regional Hospital has been a proud sponsor of Relay for Life and the RRH Curesader team will once again be participating in the 2022 Relay for Life on October 8th at Leroy Jackson Park. Almost everyone has been affected by cancer and being involved allows us to come together and share our stories, find support and bring awareness and education. Educating ourselves on the steps we can take to improve our health and to stay healthy and well is very important – especially now. Uniting as a community, volunteering our time and giving back for a great cause only makes us stronger. If you are interested in participating in Relay for Life or would like more information please call 760-499-3825 or go to <https://relayforlife.org/ridgecrestca>.

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