

Sunburn

Sunburn is red, hot and sore skin caused by too much sun. It may flake and peel after a few days. You can treat it yourself. It usually gets better within 7 days.

How to ease sunburn yourself

Do

- ✓ get out of the sun as soon as possible
- ✓ cool your skin with a cool shower, bath or damp towel - do not to let a baby or young child get too cold
- ✓ apply aftersun cream or spray, like aloe vera
- ✓ drink plenty of water to cool down and prevent [dehydration](#)
- ✓ take painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen for any pain
- ✓ cover sunburnt skin from direct sunlight until skin has fully healed

Don't

- ✗ do not use petroleum jelly on sunburnt skin
- ✗ do not put ice or ice packs on sunburnt skin
- ✗ do not pop any blisters
- ✗ do not scratch or try to remove peeling skin
- ✗ do not wear tight-fitting clothes over sunburnt skin

Talk to a pharmacist

You can ask a pharmacist:

- about the best sunburn treatments
- if you need to see a GP

When to talk to your GP

Talk to your GP if:

- your skin has blisters or is swollen
- your temperature is very high, or you feel hot and shivery
- you feel very tired, dizzy and sick
- you have a headache and muscle cramps
- your baby or young child has sunburn

Severe sunburn can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. These can be very serious.

Getting sunburnt can increase your chance of getting skin cancer.

[Preventing skin cancer](#)

Content supplied by the [NHS](#) and adapted for Ireland by the HSE

Sláintecare.

This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 123.

Page last reviewed: 29 March 2021

Next review due: 29 March 2024

HSE Live - we're here to help

Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm

Saturday: 9am to 5pm

Sunday: Closed

Bank holidays: Closed

Freephone: [1800 700 700](tel:1800700700)

From outside Ireland: [00 353 1 240 8787](tel:0035312408787)

[HSE Facebook](#)

[HSE Instagram](#)

[HSE TikTok](#)

[HSE YouTube](#)

[HSE LinkedIn](#)

[HSE X \(Twitter\)](#)

[Complaints and feedback](#)

[Emergencies](#)

[Cookie settings](#)

[Cookie statement](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy statement](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

© Health Service Executive