

## Transcript - Dr Michael Kimlin - UV

### **Dr. Michael Kimlin discusses UV Index levels in regards to sun exposure.**

Dr. Michael Kimlin:

So with UV it's really important not to equate feeling hot with actual sunlight or UV exposure. So that's why it's really important particularly in these cooler months in Queensland that people protect their skin during winter because you can't feel or see UV. Now our UV levels here in winter are actually as high as summer time levels in Europe. So we need to look after our skin all year long. And because you can't see it or feel it, you need to look at these daily protection strategies such as sunscreen and clothing.

UV indexes are a way that we have come together as a scientific community to come up with a very simple to use scale, that the higher the number equals the higher the UV exposure. That's what the UV index is. Anything over a UV index 11 is considered extreme so you really do need to take caution with anything over UV index 11.

In Brisbane in summer we had UV indices in the middle of the day of somewhere around sixteen, seventeen or perhaps even eighteen. And in winter we are getting peak UV indices of around about eight or nine during winter. So remember the higher the number the more chance you have of accruing having skin damage. So you need to keep an eye on the newspaper and the weather report, because there you will get the UV index value to give you a guide on what sun protection you should do the next day.

Feeling heat we don't have detectors in our skin to detect UV. We do have detectors in our skin to detect heat incase we pick up a hot cup of tea. But unfortunately because Mother Nature hasn't given us UV sensors in our skin, we are unable to actually detect when damage is occurring to our skin, until it is too late and we have sunburn.

So, we can still get burnt on a cold, cloudy day and in fact sometimes even more at risk on a cold cloudy day, because the light can actually be scattered all around and you can get sun burnt quite bad. A great example is that on a winter's day you can still get sun burnt, especially if you go skiing out in the snow. Where even in the middle of winter you can get enough sunlight exposure, even in a few hours to get sun burnt.

So I think it is important that people realize that there is a disconnect between what you feel and what the temperature is outside, and what the burning capability of the sun is.

Look a UV index as I said is a guide to let you know how strong the sun is and in Queensland it is strong all the time. So we should be thinking of sun protection all year and ways we can reduce sun exposure; sunscreen, hats and sun avoidance. I think sun avoidance is something that we really need to think about, because it is a very cheap and simple way of reducing

individual sun exposure. As simple as instead of eating your lunch outdoors or having a coffee outdoors, going inside even for an hour or two can actually reduce your exposure significantly.

How to protect your skin? Well a good way to protect your skin is to avoid the sun, that's certainly getting out of the sun is the best way to reduce your exposure. But thinking about appropriate clothing, and believe it or not wearing even something as simple as a long sleeve shirt and long sleeve pants can reduce your exposure significantly. Hats and sunscreen as well are a good way to reduce exposure.

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