

Sun Safety Tips for Autistic Adults



Keeping safe in the sun should be a priority for everyone, especially in Summer and especially in Australia.

Protection from harmful UV rays and sunburn is vital for avoiding long-term skin damage. However, many Autistic people have sensory sensitivities which can make some of the sun safety advice challenging to implement. There are ways to keep you safe from the sun while also taking your sensory needs into consideration. Here you can find some tips to help make sun protection a little easier.

1. Use sensory-friendly sunscreen

- Try roll on or spray sunscreen. This type of sunscreen is not as thick as traditional pump or squeeze sunscreen, so it needs less rubbing in and feels lighter on the skin. You can get sample sizes of different sunscreens and try a variety of textures and fragrances until you find one that works for you. You can also try moisturisers with a high SPF for your face.
- Sunscreen often feels most greasy when you first apply it so try distracting yourself with a fun video or music while you apply it. It should start to feel better after it's had a chance to soak in.
- Try different ways of applying sunscreen:
 - Use a soft make-up brush to gently apply face sunscreen.
 - Try applying sunscreen with firm pressure to see if it feels better. If someone is helping you, you can ask them to apply it with firm pressure.

2. Find comfortable, sun-smart clothing

Wide brim hats and shirts with sleeves and collars should be worn when outdoors. Below are some sun-smart clothing suggestions you might also want to try.

- Sun protection sleeves (also called driving sleeves) are a good option for lightweight arm coverage.
- The Cancer Council recommends fabrics that are woven together more tightly (e.g., linen, cotton, hemp) as they let fewer UV rays through.
- If you can, try on different clothing options in store. This gives you the opportunity to feel the different fabrics and work out what you like and what feels comfortable. You can also try on different hats to find one that works for you.

"I wear driving sleeves to prevent burning on my hands and arms when I'm driving."

- Amaze Community Member -

3. Create sun-safe habits

Get in the habit of seeking or creating shade when you are outdoors.

- Find covered areas out of the sun or create shade with a pop-up tent if you're going to the beach or a park.
- Use a parasol or umbrella when walking to keep out of the sun. Make sure the umbrella you are using is not transparent.

4. Make sun-safe habits part of your routine

Find ways to work sun-safe practices into your daily routine.

- Check the weather app in the morning to see what the UV index is for the day and, if possible, plan outdoor activities before or after high-UV times.
- Add sunscreen into your morning routine. You can add it after you get dressed for the day and apply it to the parts of your skin that will be exposed to the sun.
- Keep your favourite hat and sunglasses somewhere easily accessible (e.g., by the front door or in your car).

“I use the SunSmart app to find out what hours of the day that sun protection is recommended and plan my outdoor activities to be either before or after those times.”

- Amaze Community Member -

It might take time to find a sun smart routine and products that work well for you. Don't be afraid to keep trying new strategies, you'll eventually find the right ones for you. A good sun protection routine means you can spend quality time outside without the worry of sunburn or skin damage.

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