



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact**  
Kelly Duncan | [kduncan@sapphirehc.org](mailto:kduncan@sapphirehc.org)  
406-541-0475

## **Stay Safe Under the Montana Sun**

*Protect Yourself from Harmful UV Rays This Summer*

HAMILTON, Montana (August 5, 2024) – As the summer heat progresses with fluctuating temperatures, the importance of protecting yourself and your loved ones from ultraviolet (UV) rays remains crucial. Prolonged exposure to UV rays can result in serious skin and eye damage, weaken the immune system, and increase the risk of skin cancer.

Sapphire Community Health, in Hamilton, urges individuals to adopt preventive measures to avoid UV-related health issues, even on cooler days. “Enjoying the beautiful Montana outdoors is a cherished activity, but it’s important to remain cautious about UV exposure,” says Johanna Dreiling, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Sapphire Community Health in Hamilton. “Simple precautions can go a long way in keeping you safe.”

Staying indoors during peak sun hours, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., helps reduce UV exposure. When you do go outside, wearing sunscreen year-round is essential. UV rays can cause skin aging and increase the risk of cancer. Using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 is recommended. If you plan on swimming or engaging in water activities, choose a water-resistant sunscreen and reapply it according to the product’s directions.

Eye protection is also vital to prevent damage from UV rays. Prolonged exposure without proper eye protection can lead to conditions like corneal burns or cataracts. Selecting sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays is crucial. “For those spending time outdoors, gray-colored lenses can reduce light intensity and offer more natural vision,” advises Dr. Dreiling.

Choosing appropriate clothing is another effective way to protect your skin. Fabrics with tight weaves provide better UV protection. When spending time outside, opt for wide-brimmed hats and dark, heavy cotton garments to shield your skin from harmful rays.

Staying hydrated is essential to prevent heat-related illnesses, even during Hamilton’s cooler nights. Sweating cools the body but can lead to fluid loss and dehydration. Drinking plenty of water or sports drinks is advisable, while avoiding soft drinks, coffee, and alcohol, as they can accelerate dehydration.

“Outdoor activities are a beloved part of Montana life, but preparation is key to staying safe,”

**MORE**



**Stay Safe Under the Montana Sun**  
**Page 2**

Dr. Dreiling emphasizes. Whether hiking, gardening, or simply enjoying the fresh air, these precautions can help prevent discomfort and health issues.”

For more information on sun safety and health tips, consult your primary care provider at Sapphire Community Health, 406-541-0032.

**About Sapphire Community Health**

Established in 2015, Sapphire Community Health (SCH) is a comprehensive, community-based outpatient primary health and mental healthcare center serving Montana's greater Bitterroot Valley region. Located in Hamilton, Montana, SCH offers a wide range of patient-centered health and wellness services, including primary healthcare, acute care services, women's health, pediatric care, clinical laboratory services, mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, social services, and pharmacy services. For more information, please visit [www.sapphirechc.org](http://www.sapphirechc.org).

###