

Sun Protection

Questions and Facts for Soldiers

Why should I protect myself from the sun?



Sunburn is the most common injury. In snow-covered areas, soldiers risk sunburn and "snowblindness," a brief painful swelling of the eye. High lifetime sun exposure increases the risk for skin cancer and cataract blindness.

One American dies every hour from skin cancer.

How do I protect my skin?

Seek shade, and use your uniform to cover your arms and legs. Wide-brimmed hats can protect the head and neck, or use sunscreens with high Sun Protection Factors (SPF's) and ideally reapply every couple of hours.



How do I protect my eyes?

Sunglasses with wraparound design work well, protecting at the front and side. Wide-brimmed hats can also be used. Use goggles in snow-covered areas.

When should I protect myself?

Roughly midday, from 10 am to 4 pm. Use the rule "Short Shadow? Seek Shade!" Sensitive-skinned individuals get a light sunburn in about 35 minutes when their shadow is as long as their height, but need over 90 minutes when their shadow is twice as long.

The Shadow Rule for UV Protection

Short Shadow, shorter than your height = High UV
Long Shadow, longer than your height = Low UV



See medical personnel if you have questions about sun injuries.