



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Antoine M. Thompson

## Senator Thompson Says June Is Time For Beaches, Barbeques – And Safety "Common Sense Safety Tips to Ensusre Fun In The Sun This Summer."

ANTOINE M THOMPSON June 2, 2009

**Buffalo, NY** - June means beaches, barbeques, and cool dips in the pool. June is also National Safety Month, and Senator Thompson has put together a list of sun safety tips to remember this summer.

More than 1 million cancer diagnoses each year are sun related, so it's important to protect your skin. Only sunscreen – or staying out of the sun altogether – can protect you from the sun's harmful rays.

"With longer days and summer vacation, our children will be spending more time outside. By using sunscreen and taking common sense sun safety steps, their outdoors playtime will be a healthy time," says Senator Thompson.

Of course, children aren't the only ones who can benefit by spending time in the sun safely. Whether you spend time outdoors for your job, for home and garden or recreation, you'll be exposed to the sun.

Here are the basics for sun safety:

- Sunscreen is rated by SPF – the higher the SPF number, the greater protection.
- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen (SPF 15 minimum)
- Seek shade or avoid outdoor activities during midday when the sun is strongest. Drink lots of water to stay hydrated.

- Cover up with long sleeved shirts, a protective hat, and longer pants vs. shorts.
- Wear glasses that block UV rays.

To clear up some common misunderstandings about sun safety, here are the facts:

- Can you get sun burnt on a cloudy day?
  - Yes, as up to 80% of solar UV radiation can penetrate light cloud cover.
- If the temperature is not that high am I still at risk?
  - Yes. Sunburn is caused by UV radiation that cannot be felt. The temperature, or heating effect, is caused by the sun's infrared radiation and not by UV radiation. Temperature and UV levels are not related.
- Does a tan protect you from the sun?
  - A dark tan on fair skin offers only limited protection, equivalent to an SPF of about 4.
- Do I have to be careful if I have olive skin?
  - Yes. Everyone, regardless of skin type, should be aware of the risk of skin damage. Many people with olive skin underestimate how much protection they need.
- Do sunscreens allow me to sunbathe much longer?
  - Make sure you apply sunscreen 20 minutes prior to sun exposure and reapply every 2 hours. Sunscreens should not be the only or main form of protection from the sun. They should also not be used to increase sun exposure time, but as additional protection during unavoidable exposure or on those parts of the body that cannot otherwise be covered.
- Can you get sun burnt in the water?
  - Water offers only minimal protection from UV radiation, and reflection from water can enhance your UV radiation exposure.

You can learn more about sun safety for you and your family by going to the Environmental Protection Agency web site, <http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/actionsteps.html>.