

🦰 Climate Change, UV Exposure, and Golfer Health

Summary Report - July 2025

© Purpose

To inform golf course communities, especially those serving older adults, about the rising risks of UV exposure linked to climate change, and recommend protective measures to reduce long-term health impacts.

Key Findings

1. Climate Change Is Increasing UV Risk

- More sunny days and longer golf seasons due to global warming are increasing the duration and intensity of UV exposure for golfers.
- Reduced cloud cover, hotter midday temperatures, and fewer shaded playing environments compound exposure.
- Reflective surfaces (e.g. sand traps, greens, water hazards) can intensify UV radiation from below.

2. Health Risks Are Elevated for Golfers

- Golfers spend **4+ hours outdoors per round**, often during peak UV hours.
- Studies from 2023–2025 confirm that:
 - o Golfers have up to 2.4× the risk of skin cancer compared to the general population.
 - Common areas of concern include the ears, neck, forearms, and nose.
 - Older golfers face increased risk due to cumulative sun exposure and reduced skin repair mechanisms.

3. Behavioral Gaps Exist

 Despite awareness of sun risks, less than half of outdoor athletes—including golfers—use adequate sun protection.

• Many golfers **skip sunscreen reapplication** or fail to use wide-brimmed hats and UV-blocking clothing.

Recent Research Highlights

| Study (Year) | Finding |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| BMC Sports Science (2025) | Coaches note rising UV exposure and lack of formal protections |
| Australian Golf Epidemiology (2024) | Golfers 2.4x more likely to develop skin cancer than general population |
| Systematic Review (2022) | Low sunscreen use despite high awareness among outdoor athletes |
| Golfers' Survey (2021) | Strong support for environmental sun protection (e.g. sunscreen stations) |

Recommendations for Golf Communities

Personal Protection

- Apply broad-spectrum SPF 30+ before play and every 2 hours
- Wear UPF-rated clothing, wide-brim hats, and UV400 sunglasses
- Avoid tee times between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when possible

K Environmental Supports

- Install shade structures at tee boxes and greens
- Provide free or low-cost sunscreen stations
- Add sun safety signage at pro shops, restrooms, and starter kiosks

Digital Tools

- Encourage use of **UV Index apps** (e.g. EPA, WHO SunSmart)
- Offer text reminders for sunscreen reapplication during rounds

Olimate-Aware Course Design (Optional Additions)

- Use tree lines and vegetative buffers to reduce direct UV and reflectivity
- Incorporate climate-resilient landscaping to reduce both sun and heat stress
- Partner with local dermatology or public health organizations for education sessions

★ Conclusion

As climate change extends the golf season and intensifies UV exposure, **senior-focused communities and course operators** must prioritize **UV protection policies**. Proactive steps can reduce cancer risk, enhance player comfort, and promote long-term health—especially for older golfers.