

Episode 5

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Welcome to The New Life in Australia podcast, hosted by me, Karen Bleakley, founder of Smart Steps to australia.com. Moving to Australia with my family was a life-changing experience, but it wasn't without its challenges. That's why I'm passionate about making the relocation and resettlement process easier for you so you can enjoy this exciting adventure.

Join me and my special guests as we share professional secrets and tips. Learn from people who've made the move and discover businesses that can help you realize your dreams. Now. It's the best time to create the life you've always wanted. This podcast is here to show you what's possible and to inspire you every step of the way. Let's go

Let's take a moment to acknowledge the Gubbi Gubbi people, the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which I live, work, and play. I thank them for the privilege of being able to live in such an incredible part of the world, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present, and emerging. Hey there.

[00:01:00] My name's Karen Bleakley, and you are tuning in to episode five of The New Life in Australia podcast. Today I'm going to be talking about and sharing my top 11 tips to stay sun safe in Australia. Now I live in Queensland. It gets really, really hot now. I love hot weather. I really love the sunshine. The tagline for Queensland used to be beautiful one day. Perfect the next, and it really does sum up the lifestyle here we have this beautiful big blue sky above us. We don't very often have clouds in the sky. More often than not, you will have a beautiful sunny day in Queensland, so I really love it. But you do really need to take care and respect the sun in Australia.

Australia actually has the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. So I know that can be a really scary thing to hear, and I know that I get a lot of emails from people telling me that they're really concerned about moving to Australia and the dangers for their kids when they're moving here with the, the strong sun [00:02:00] that we have here.

Now the sunsmart.com.au website says that more than two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime, and over 2000 Australians die every year from skin cancer. So it's something that's really important to be aware of now to consider when you first arrive in Australia, so that you are building your lives knowing that information, and you are respectful of the

extreme weather that we have here, because there are lots of things you can do. Planning for Sun Safety in Australia is something to take action on right away. As soon as you move to Australia. It's something to build into your lives here, and then it just becomes second nature being sun safe. It's not something you have to think about. But it, it does take a little bit of planning in the beginning just to get used to it.

So I've put together these 11 top tips to help you stay sunsafe in Australia.

My tip number one for staying unsafe in Australia is pretty obvious, really is to avoid being out during the hottest part of the [00:03:00] day Now. In summer, it can get really hot really early. So I know that when we first arrived here, we were quite shocked that playgrounds would be completely deserted during most of the sort of daytime from say 11 o'clock in the morning till two, three o'clock in the afternoon.

But it's because people know that the hottest part of the day is not the time that you want to be walking to the park or playing in the park or being out in the hot sun, especially for playgrounds and things, because equipment can get really hot. I know that our kids have had burns off slides, metal slides, or fireman's poles and things like that because the, they do get really, really hot in the sun.

And also, if you've got a dog, you need to be aware not to be walking your dog in the hot part of the day. I know that my dog in, in sun summertime in Queensland, we walk him early in the morning and really it gets too hot by sort of eight, nine o'clock on some mornings to, to take him out because [00:04:00] the ground is just so hot.

So a really good tip for that is that I put my own foot on the pavement. See, If I can stand the, the temperature of the pavement, if I can, then, then it's not too hot, then it's okay for him. But if, if I find it's too hot for me, then it's too hot for him to go for a walk as well. So yeah, just avoiding being out in the hottest part of the day.

Now, there are always times that you have to go out, but it's just about planning whether you are going to be undercover or whether you're heading somewhere indoors. You just don't want to be out somewhere in an exposed area in the hot part of the day.

Tip number two is wear clothes, cover your skin. Now, I know that when we were traveling on holidays from the UK, the sun was such a rare occurrence that say if we went to Spain on holiday or to Greece, you wanted to strip off and you

wanted to get sun on your shoulders and you kind of wanted to get as much sun on your body as you could.

It was not something that you really were concerned about. You wanted to get that tan. So when you move to Australia, the attitude here is [00:05:00] very different. I'm really much more aware now of, of keeping clothes on that cover my skin. I try not to go out sort of in like a vest top or something that cover that has my top shoulders uncovered.

It's really important to try to stay covered, so wearing shirts, wearing things that cover your arms, wearing things that just give you some more coverage because if your skin's covered, then it protects it from the sun.

The thing is, you know that in Australia there's going to be more sun. It's not like you have to strip off and lay by the pool, getting a tan every single day in the panic that the sun's gonna go away again really soon because it's not, it's gonna be hot all the time. So you'll still pick up tan skin even when you are trying to stay covered up.

It's just a natural part of life in Australia, but I just, just make sure that you stay covered up as much as you can, especially when it's really hot weather.

Tip number three is always wear a hat. In summertime, especially. Now schools here have [00:06:00] a no hat, no play rule, which I think is great. It gets our kids into the habit of it really young. We always have hats with us, we always have backup hats as well, so my kids lose their hats constantly and we make sure that they've got a second hat in their school bag all the time so that if they lose one hat, they've got another one and they don't have to sit out from playtime.

We also have backup hats in the car, so if we want to kind of jump out somewhere for a play or a walk at the beach after school or something, we've got hats that they can, and it just becomes second nature when you start making sure that's on your checklist of things. You've got your car keys, you've got your wallets, you've got your hats.

It just becomes something that you make sure that you take with you. So just buy a few different hats for different occasions as well. I love having a range of different hats, but just always make sure you've got a hat on you in summertime.

So tip number four is to wear sunscreen and to keep reapplying it through the day, especially after you've been in the water. So if you've been in the pool or at the beach, just give it a top-up layer. [00:07:00] It's so important to wear sunscreen all the time in Australia. It's just a habit that you get into and, and if you start it from day one, it's really easy to just build that into a habit and now our kids know that before they go out in the morning, one of their tasks, after they've done their teeth and they've got themselves ready for school, they have to put sunscreen on before they leave the house. It's just one of their morning tasks that they do, and they also reapply it regularly at school when they go out for playtime or for sports events and things like that.

So hopefully the next generation skin will be more protected because it's been built into them as a habit to do every day. When we made the move to Australia, I remember reading an article from some people that were talking about things that they wish they'd known when they moved to Australia. And one of the things that was in this article was somebody said they really wished that they had protected their skin daily with sunscreen from the minute they arrived in Australia because a few years down the line, their skin was actually really showing signs of sun damage, [00:08:00] and they really wished that they'd thought about that ahead of time and just taken that action right from the beginning. So I know for me, it's something that I, I took away from that article and made, made a point of always making sure that I was wearing a strong factor moisturizer on my face.

I'm wearing sunscreen on my arms every day and my legs, and whenever I kind of go out and I'm exposed to make sure I've got sunscreen on. Now I have to say at first I didn't used to put it on the backs of my hands, and I can see sun damage on my hands from the fact that I didn't wear sunscreen on the backs of my hands.

So now I make sure that I cover it right down my arms, onto my hands as well. It's really important just to stay sun safe and to think about the sunscreen that you are wearing. We wear like a high factor sunscreens. I love zinc sunscreen. I've got an article on my site, which I'll link below with some of the reviews of our favorite brands that we use.

I've used lots of different brands over the years. But yeah, it's something that I always have with me. I always carry a tube of sunscreen in my bag because it's something that I [00:09:00] can then reapply on top of through the day.

Tip number five is to take a beach shade with you when you go to the beach. Now I love going to the beach. I love spending a long, lazy day at the beach, but

to just lay on the sand in the sun is a bit extreme here in Australia, especially in the summertime. So you can get amazing pop-up beach shades.

I've got links again that I can share in the show notes so you can have a look at those. But taking a shade, it could be as simple as a sun umbrella, or it could be like a popup, beach cabana, or there's all kinds of different shades. You don't have to spend a lot of money on one, but it really makes a difference to how much you enjoy your day at the beach because you can stay protected in the shade.

It makes the whole day so much more enjoyable.

Tip number six is always carry water with you. Now I, that's just something that we've just done from the minute we arrived. We just bought a bunch of reusable bottles that keep water cold for like 12 to 24 hours and we [00:10:00] just fill them up and we take them everywhere we go. So if I go out in the car, I have a bottle of water with me.

If I go on the school run in summertime, I make sure I've got a bottle of water. 'cause by the time I've kind of got in and walked to the school gates from the car, met the kids and walked back, I need a drink. You really dehydrate really quickly in Australia. So always having water is really important.

Following on from that. Tip number seven is that you can get rehydration drinks, sachets and icy poles. So they sell these electrolyte drinks where you can replace the salts in your body. You can get. Icy poles that you buy, that you take home and actually freeze at home, and you can get sachets that you can just stir into water.

So they're great if you've been sick and you've had a gastro bug or anything like that, but they're also really good if you are spending a lot of time outside. We found them really useful when we first arrived in Australia because. Being outside in summer really does take a lot out of you, and that just [00:11:00] gives you a little bit of a boost.

I know that when my husband's been doing like gardening or anything outside or doing any big maintenance works on the house outside, he really, really needs something like that just to give him some, replace those electrolytes back into his body to replace salts back into his body. It really does help.

Tip number eight is to always wear UV sun shirts or rash vests, rash guards, whatever you'll want to call them, or swimming costumes that have arms built

into them. Basically swimming costume material in a top. Especially a long sleeve top or an all-in-one swimming costume that's got sleeves in it.

Just something that covers your body with some sun protection. And especially when you're in and out of the pool, the sun's rays are really hot and they reflect from the water as well. So my kids never, ever go to the beach or in the pool during the daytime without wearing rash vests. It's really [00:12:00] important, and they're not very expensive to buy.

You can get them from Target, from Kmart, big W. There's lots of brand names, ones you can buy too. They tend not to last more than a year or two because they kind of get washed out a little bit, but they're just so, so important to buy them and wear them. As I say, I really like the long sleeved ones.

I think it's really important. Even I wear them too, because I don't want to be getting really sunburn. It's not fun and it just makes it so much easier because you don't have sunscreen to, those areas. Tip number nine is always wear sunglasses when it's bright sunshine. Now, I had absolutely no idea that the sun can lead to major eye problems, but it can cause cataracts and cancers on the surface of the eye. And plus, obviously, a good pair of sunglasses that that covers quite a, a big area around your eyes.

It helps protect around your eyes too, so it does help protect the skin as well as your actual eyes, so it's really important. I know when we first got here, I invested in a really expensive but really great [00:13:00] pair of prescription sunglasses and they've lasted me for years and I absolutely love them and they've been one of the best investments that I've made.

I really, really love wearing them, and I don't leave the house without them, especially in summer, but even in winter, it can get really, really sunny. So I wear them all year round.

Tip number 10 is to take cool bags with you to preserve food. Now, I dunno what you call cool bags, where you are from. They could be an esky, they could be a chili bin, I think in New Zealand, different names for them, but basically the bag that you can transport sort of dairy products and, and food that you want to keep cold and you can pop an ice block in there to keep it nice and chilled.

Now that's really important, especially for things like packed lunches, especially if you're sending your kids to school with their packed lunches. You can buy them a cool bag, a little or a lunchbox that's kind of got an ice block pack area

in it. Because it's really important that you keep food safe when you're out on the go.

Yes. It's not about protecting your skin this time, but it's more about [00:14:00] protecting your body because you don't want your food to be outside in the intense heat that we have here. You want it to stay nice and cool if you're going to eating things like yogurts or meats or cheese or anything like that.

Now I know that in prep our kids' classrooms had fridges in them, but the rest of the years at our school don't have fridges. And I'm imagining that most schools are pretty similar. So it's down to you to make sure that you've got a lunchbox that your kids can take that have. Ice blocks in them to keep their food cool so that, that it doesn't go off during the daytime.

It can also be really important to take cool bags when you go food shopping, because imagine when you come out of Coles or Woolworths and you've got your gigantic food shop with you, and you've got all this frozen things like ice cream. It really doesn't take long before it can start to melt in your car.

'cause cars obviously when you get back into your car, it's really hot. So I always take cool bags when I go shopping for the frozen stuff and for cool things [00:15:00] to just keep them chilled on the journey home.

Final tip number 11, which is really, really important, is to get annual skin screenings. Make sure you get your skin checked every single year. Now you might have to pay an out-of-pocket fee for this now, or you might still be able to find some places that bulk bill this, which means that you don't have an out-of-pocket fee to pay.

But I Googled bulk billing skin checks near me earlier in the year, and I was able to find a place of my suburb that did free skin checks. So I just went in and I got a bulk bill skin check. It didn't cost me anything. Somebody just checked over my skin really carefully, just kept an eye on it. Just let me know that it was all in good condition.

There was nothing that I needed to be aware of, but it's really important to go back year after year to keep getting this done. Some places might charge a fee. You might be out pocket \$50. It depends on where you go. So worth it. Anything that does change, you want to be on top of it. You want to be [00:16:00] aware of it so that you can keep an eye on it and you know what's happening to your skin.

Do not ignore it. Do not leave it. Get an annual skin check every year. So that's my top 11 tips for sun safety in Australia. One, avoid the hottest part of the day. Two, wear clothes that cover your skin. Three, always wear a hat. Four, wear sunscreen daily and reapply it when you've been in the water. Five. Take some shade with you when you go to the beach so that you can sit under it and enjoy your day.

Six. Always carry water with you seven. Buy electrolyte drinks and icy poles and sachets to keep you rehydrated. Eight. Wear UV sun shirts or rash vests or rash guards or swimming costumes with sleeves so that you are protected when you're in the water. Nine. Wear sunglasses. 10. Take cool bags to preserve your food.

11, get your skin checked regularly.

So the main takeaways from this is to take the sun in Australia [00:17:00] seriously. I know it can sound scary, but it is just about building in these regular habits so that you are on top of everything and you are aware of everything and you are doing all the right things to avoid skin cancer issues in the future.

A lot of us move here to Australia for the better weather. I know that I certainly did, and I love it in Queensland. I love the sunshine. I really, really love it, but I respect the sunshine here. I respect the weather, and I just make sure that I'm careful.

That's it for another episode. I hope you found it useful for your new life in Australia. If you did, please consider leaving me a positive review as it really helps spread the word, and I'd really, really appreciate it. Tune in again as we build Your New Life in Australia,

one episode at a time