

National Consensus Process Produces Updated Sun Safety Guidelines for Canadians

Ottawa, June 6, 2016 – Representatives from 28 organizations across the country have produced a single set of up-to-date guidelines on sun safety ensure that Canadians get consistent messages about what they should do to reduce the risk of skin cancer.

The guidelines were developed in time for the Canadian Dermatology Association's (CDA) Sun Awareness Week, which takes place annually the first full week in June – this year, from June 6 to 12.

The development of the guidelines was supported by several agencies, including Cancer Care Ontario (CCO), the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) and the CDA. A committee was convened and set out a national consensus process for arriving at a final set of public guidelines.

“It is really important that all of our messages to the public align and are rigorously supported by scientific evidence,” said Dr. Jennifer Beecker, National Spokesperson for the CDA's Sun Awareness Program. “With 28 organizations developing their own educational materials, there is likely to be variation. This new document will ensure that all our efforts are consistent.”

“Skin Cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer,” said Dr. Beecker. “In spite of this, the incidence of skin cancer continues to rise. Good, consistent public education is vital to reversing this trend.”

“This was a stellar example of organizations with common interests working together,” said Dr. Beecker. “I believe it heralds a new, more concerted and more collaborative phase in our efforts to reduce skin cancer in Canada.”

The work was supported by a 2013 review of existing public messages undertaken by the Ontario Sun Safety Working Group, which was completed in consultation with a scientific panel. The national steering committee convened by CCO, CCS and CDA took the Sun Safety Working Group's output and revised the content where necessary, integrating feedback from external reviewers, with a view to increasing usability for public education. The steering committee then:

- Engaged a health communications expert
- Identified stakeholders throughout the country
- Establish a clear framework and criteria for achieving consensus
- Conducted an in-person workshop
- Conducted pre- and post-workshop surveys with stakeholders regarding messaging content

The result is a set of user-friendly messages that has the buy-in of organizations involved in public sun safety education and that will be used consistently across all educational materials.

It covers such basic information as when to protect your skin (when the UV Index is 3 or higher), the recommended SPF factor for sunscreen (at least 30) and a warning not to use tanning equipment. It includes further tips on shade, clothing, sunscreens and eye protection.

The primary recommended protective action statements are as follows:

Enjoy the sun safely: protect your skin, protect your eyes.

Protect your skin

- When the UV Index is 3 or higher, protect your skin as much as possible. In general, the UV Index in Canada can be 3 or higher from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. between April and September, even if it's cloudy.
 - Seek shade or bring your own (e.g., an umbrella).
 - Wear clothing and a wide-brimmed hat that cover as much skin as possible, as appropriate to the activity and weather.
 - Use sunscreen labelled "broad spectrum" and "water-resistant" with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30, on skin not covered by clothing. Apply sunscreen generously and reapply when required.
- Don't use UV tanning equipment or deliberately try to get a suntan, and avoid getting a sunburn.

Protect your eyes

- Wear sunglasses or prescription eyeglasses with UV-protective lenses.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat for added eye protection.

Sun Awareness Week

The CDA has organized the nation-wide early summer Sun Awareness Week since 1989. The aim is to educate Canadians about the dangers of too much sun and to help stop the rising incidence of skin cancer in Canada. This year's Sun Awareness Week is Monday, June 6 to Sunday, June 12, and involves a number of events and activities across Canada, including free skin cancer screenings, community events, and school visits by dermatologists.

About the CDA

The Canadian Dermatology Association, founded in 1925, represents Canadian dermatologists. The association provides easy access to the largest, most reliable source of medical knowledge on dermatology. CDA exists to advance the science and art of medicine and surgery related to the care of the skin, hair and nails; provide continuing professional development for its members; support and advance patient care; provide public education on sun protection and other aspects of skin health; and promote a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. By doing so, CDA informs and empowers both medical professionals and the Canadian public. To learn more about what the work CDA does visit <http://www.dermatology.ca> or join the conversation on <http://www.Twitter.com/CdnDermatology> or www.Facebook.com/CdnDermatology.

About CCO

An agency of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, CCO is the Ontario government's principal advisor on cancer and chronic kidney disease care, as well as access to care for key health services. It is

guided by a mission that together we will improve the performance of our health systems in Ontario by driving quality, accountability, innovation and value. CCO uses its infrastructure, assets and models to improve the province's health systems for cancer and chronic kidney disease. It also directs and

oversees healthcare funds for hospitals and other cancer and chronic kidney disease care providers, enabling them to deliver high-quality, timely services and improved access to care.

About the CCS

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national, community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is to eradicate cancer and enhance the quality of life of people living with cancer. Thanks to our donors and volunteers, the Society has the most impact, against the most cancers, in the most communities in Canada. For more information, visit [cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) or call our toll-free bilingual Cancer Information Service at 1-888-939-3333 (TTY 1-866-786-3934). Read more: <http://www.cancer.ca/en/about-us/for-media/media-releases/ontario/2016/april/hpv-boys/?region=on#ixzz47EoSqsY5>

For further information please contact:

Nimmi Sidhu, Coordinator, Communications

Office: (613) 738-1748 ext. 228

nsidhu@dermatology.ca