



A Message to Parents

Summer is a great time to enjoy outdoor activities. But too much sunshine during childhood can cause premature skin aging, skin cancer, and eye damage later in life. While those with pale skin, freckles, light-coloured eyes, blond or red hair are at an increased risk, **all** skin colours can develop skin cancer!

According to the Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation, children born in the 90's have a 2 to 3 times higher lifetime risk of developing skin cancer compared to those born in the 60's. Current predictions are that **1-in-7** children born today will develop a skin cancer during his or her lifetime.

The good news is that you can help your children to prevent the damage from too much sunshine. Teach them to follow these simple steps:

- ❖ Limit time in the sun between 10am – 4pm
- ❖ Look for shaded areas or create shaded areas to do outdoor activities
- ❖ Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible (UV protective clothing or long-sleeved shirts and long pants are recommended)
- ❖ Wear a wide brim hat, bucket hat, or hat with a backflap
- ❖ Put on UV protective sunglasses
- ❖ Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher that gives protection from both UVA & UVB rays

Are your children getting the most from sunscreen?

Although the best choices for sun protection are to cover up and stay in the shade, sunscreen is helpful too. Here is a checklist for effective sunscreen use.

- ❖ Choose a sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher that gives protection from both UVA & UVB rays. Note: sunscreens are not recommended for infants under six months of age.
- ❖ Read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations on the bottle or tube. Sunscreen should not be left in the car or in direct sunlight. Discard when expired!

The SunSmart programme is generously sponsored by  St. Baldrick's
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- Always test for allergic reaction when first using sunscreen. Apply a small amount on your child's inner forearm for 2-3 days consecutively. Check for adverse reaction.
- Apply sunscreen generously (one ounce or 2 – 3 tablespoons to cover the entire body) to exposed skin at least 30 minutes before going out. This is important as it allows time for active ingredients in the sunscreen to begin working. Don't forget ears, nose, back of the neck and back of the legs.
- Reapply every 2 hours and after perspiring or getting wet. Sunscreen (including water resistant varieties) should be reapplied every 2 hours and after skin becomes wet to maintain maximum effectiveness.
- Remember to **towel dry** skin before reapplying sunscreen as it must be applied to dry skin to be effective. Use an SPF 30 lip balm for lips.
- If applying more than one substance (e.g. insect repellent), always put the sunscreen product on first and wait 30 minutes after applying. Then apply the second substance. (Insect repellent is not recommended for children less than two years old).
- Use sunscreen even on cloudy, hazy or foggy days. As much as 80% of the sun's ultra violet rays can pass through the clouds.

Remember, no sunscreen protects 100%. So apply sunscreen and then cover up with a hat, long-sleeve shirt and pants or use shade as much as possible. Be sure to teach your children these tips for getting the most from sunscreen.

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