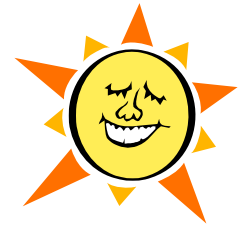


Sun Safety Information Guide For Schools



Dear School Staff:

This *Information Guide* contains facts and tips to assist you in bringing "sun safety" alive in your school. Children and adolescents, in play and sports activities at school, are often exposed to too much ultraviolet radiation (UVR) in sunlight. It is important for students to be active and get fresh air and protect themselves from over-exposure to UVR.

The health risks associated with over-exposure to UVR are largely preventable. With some simple steps, eyes and skin can be protected. You can play an important part in this. Use this guide to:

- Educate students about these health concerns (pp. 2-4).
- Raise awareness about standard sun safety recommendations (pp. 5-8).
- Make sun safety an integral part of your regular outdoor school programming as well as special outdoor events or outings (pp. 9, 13).
- Promote Sun Safety Awareness (pp. 9-13).

By making it an important goal to prevent sunburn and protect eyes you will be giving your students the best gift of all -- health for a lifetime.

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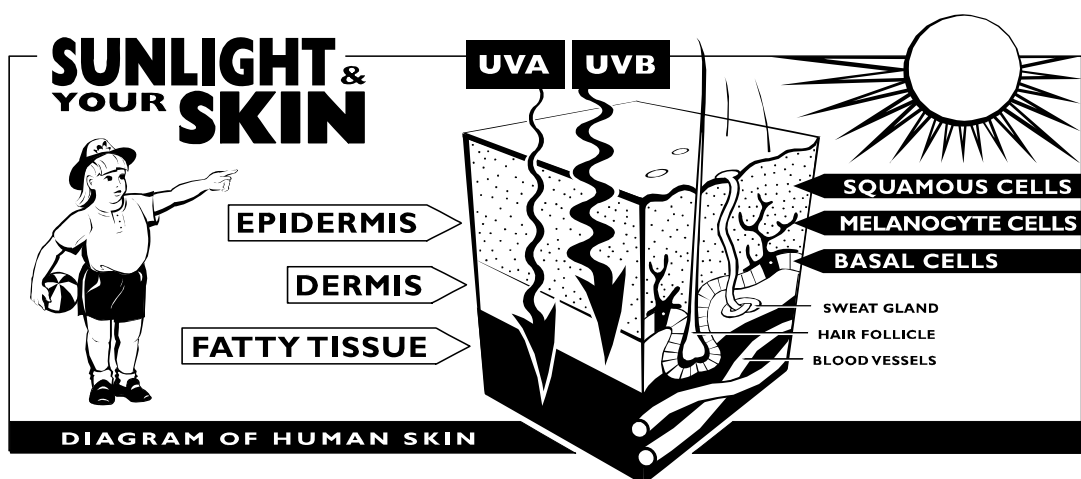
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **In Canada, we receive enough ultraviolet radiation (UVR) through sunlight to damage our skin and eyes even when the ozone layer is normal. However, with the gradual thinning of this layer since 1980, Canadian adults and children are being exposed to a more intense penetration of UVR. Environment Canada predicts this increase to continue at least until the year 2050. Artificial tanning is another source of UVR exposure.**
- **Infants and children are at high risk for over-exposure to sunlight.**
 - Children have the highest amount of sun exposure of any age group. (National Skin Cancer Survey 2006)
 - Infants and children have thinner skin than adults and are more sensitive to UV rays. (Health Canada)
 - All skin colours are at risk for skin damage from UV rays. Those at greatest risk for skin damage are fair-skinned children, especially those who freckle, burn easily, never tan or tan poorly.
- **Health risks associated with over-exposure to UVR include sunburns, skin aging, eye damage and skin cancers.**
 - One blistering sunburn during childhood can double the chance of a child developing skin cancer later in life. This is because the damage to the skin cells does not go away but rather accumulates with each sunburn over the years.
 - The incidence of skin cancer is steadily increasing in Canada.
 - An estimated 73,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer in 2008; an additional 4,600 will be diagnosed with melanoma, a very serious form of skin cancer (Canadian Cancer Society Statistics/National Cancer Institute of Canada: Canadian Cancer Statistics, 2008).
 - An estimated 30,000 Ontarians will be diagnosed with skin cancer each year, about 2,000 of them with melanoma (Cancer Care Ont., June 2005).
 - One in seven children born today will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. (Canadian Dermatology Association)
- **The health risks associated with over-exposure to UVR are largely preventable!**

Did You Know that...

Up to 80% of ultraviolet radiation passes through puffy, fair-weather clouds, haze, fog and layers of thin, light cloud. The sun safety recommendations apply on cloudy and hazy days too.

Furthermore, a child can receive an additional 10 - 80 % more UVR if that child is on or near a surface such as sand, cement, water or snow that reflects the sun's rays.



Did you know that...

- When you feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, the UVA and UVB rays in sunlight are passing through the surface into your skin cells below (see diagram). On a windy or overcast day, even if you don't feel the warmth, this is still happening.
- As the UV radiation penetrates into the cells below the skin surface, your skin tries to protect itself by producing a brown pigment called melanin. The melanin, which appears as a tan, tries to act as a protective shield for your skin. However, this "built-in" protective shield is only partially effective in blocking the damaging effects of UVA and UVB.
- Skin damage happens with solar or artificial tanning. The surface of the skin may look normal but skin cells can be injured at their base layer where new skin is grown. Repeat skin damage does not go away but instead builds up. Over time, this causes the skin's DNA to change, and the chance for skin cancer to develop.
- Sunburn shows up as skin redness and soreness. Peeling and /or blistering of the skin can also happen. These are signs that skin damage has occurred. Avoiding tans and sunburns to your skin and reducing overall UVR exposure can prevent skin damage.
- The sun's rays can also damage cells in the structures of your eyes. This may increase the risk for cataracts later in life. Protecting your eyes with sunglasses and/or a hat with a wide brim can prevent this damage.
- All skin colours are at risk for over-exposure to sunlight. Those at greatest risk for skin damage are fair-skinned people, especially those who freckle or burn easily, never tan or tan poorly. Damage to eyes can occur to anyone regardless of eye colour.

Enjoy the Outdoors! Just Remember to be Sun Safe!

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Environment Canada's UV Index

Interpreting the UV Index

The UV index is included in Environment Canada's weather forecasts whenever it is expected to reach 3 (moderate category) or more. This table outlines the sun protection actions recommended at different levels of the UV index. Remember that the amount of UV you receive depends on both the strength of the sun's rays (UV Index) and the amount of time you spend in the sun.

What does the UV Index mean?

UV Index	Category	Sun Protection Actions
0 - 2	Low	Minimal protection needed if outside for less than one hour. Wear sunglasses on bright days.
3 - 5	Moderate	Cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen if outside for 30 minutes or more
6 - 7	High	Protection required. Reduce time in the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. and seek shade, cover up, wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
8 - 10	Very High	Take full precautions (see "high" category) and avoid the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
11+	Extreme	Very rare in Canada. Take full precautions and avoid the sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Unprotected skin will be damaged and can burn in minutes.
<p>Proper sun protection includes wearing a broad-rimmed hat, a shirt with long sleeves and wrap-around sunglasses or ones with side shields. Choose sunscreen with 15+ SPF (sun protection factor) that offers protection against both UV-A and UV-B rays. Apply generously before going outside and reapply often, especially after swimming or exercise.</p>		

Environment Canada's UV index
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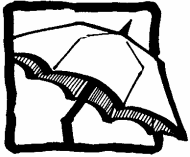
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SIX SUN SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS



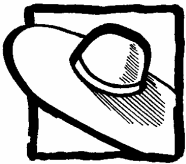
Limit time in the sun between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or whenever the UV Index is 3 or more

- ⚙ When possible, plan outdoor activities before or after this time to avoid being outside when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- ⚙ Keep babies under one year of age out of direct sunlight.



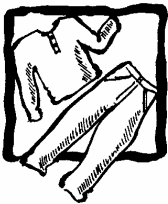
Look for shaded areas to do outdoor activities

- ⚙ Do outdoor activities in shady spots (e.g. under a tree or in the shade of a building).
- ⚙ Create shade by using an umbrella, awning, gazebo tent, pup tent or canopy.



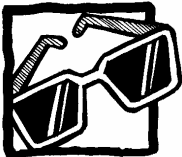
Wear a hat with a wide brim or with a visor and back flap

- ⚙ A hat with a wide brim (7.5 cm/3 inches wide) or with a back flap will help shade the head, face, eyes, ears and neck areas. Hats made of tightly woven fabric are best.



Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible

- ⚙ Long-sleeved shirts and long pants (or at least knee-length shorts) are recommended even on cloudy days.
- ⚙ Tightly woven fabrics block the sun's rays the best. Fabrics that block out the light when held up to a light bulb will help to block UV rays better.
- ⚙ T-shirts (in addition to sunscreen) can be worn when in water.



Wear UVA and UVB protective sunglasses

- ⚙ Sunglasses that wrap around the face protect better.
- ⚙ Children's sunglasses should be unbreakable.



Use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that gives protection from both UVA & UVB rays

- ⚙ Sunscreen should be applied about 30 minutes before sun exposure. Apply a second time 20 minutes later.
- ⚙ Reapply every 2 hours or after swimming, towelling or exercising.
- ⚙ Sunscreen should be used even on cloudy, hazy or foggy days.
- ⚙ Sunscreen is not recommended for infants under six months of age.
- ⚙ No sunscreen protects 100%. Use it with the other Sun Safety Recommendations.

Remember: indoor tanning is no safer than the sun.

For more information call Toronto Health Connection 416-338-7600

ARE YOU GETTING THE MOST FROM SUNSCREEN?



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

- ⊗ **Choose a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that gives protection from both UVA & UVB rays.** Look for a product with the Canadian Dermatology Association logo on it. If you are going to be outside for longer than 2 ½ hours, a SPF of 30 or higher is a better choice. (Note: Sunscreens are not recommended for infants under six months of age.)
- ⊗ **Read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations on the bottle or tube.** Check for the expiry date of the product. Do not use after expiration date.
- ⊗ **Sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes before sun exposure. Apply a second time 20 minutes later.** This is important. It allows time for the active ingredients in the sunscreen to reach the protection level.
- ⊗ **Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours or after swimming, towelling or exercising.** This includes waterproof sunscreen.
- ⊗ **Apply sunscreen generously to dry clean skin.** Sunscreen must be applied to dry clean skin generously and thoroughly to be effective. Don't forget ears, nose, back of neck and backs of legs. Also use an SPF 15 sunscreen lip balm for lips.
- ⊗ **Use a sunscreen even on cloudy, hazy, foggy and cool days.**
- ⊗ **Always test for an allergic reaction when first using a sunscreen.** Apply a small amount on your inner forearm for 2 – 3 days consecutively. Check for adverse reactions.

Application of insect repellent may reduce the effectiveness of sunscreen. When sunscreen and insect repellent are used together, cover up and wear a hat to ensure better protection from the sun. Use insect repellent as directed by the manufacturer.

Remember, no sunscreen protects 100%. So apply sunscreen and then cover up with a hat, long-sleeve shirt, pants and sunglasses.

For more information call Toronto Health Connection 416-338-7600

SUN SAFETY AWARENESS IDEAS FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Ideas to get the sun safety awareness message in your school.

- Have a school-wide hat and sunglasses day. Make it a fun day with an important message about the dangers of too much sun. Have a wacky hat and shades event with awards for the wackiest, the one that gives most shade, best group with matching hats, most hats in the class, hat with the most class etc. Let your imaginations go wild.
- Create your own sun safety slogans. Use the imaginative ideas of the students to create a sun safety poster or message for the school hall, or daily announcements as activity reminders in newsletters and any messages home to parents.
- Sun Safety Awareness week is an excellent time to start using the creative sun safety tips and slogans that your students created.
- Sun Safety Awareness week is a great time to start your school thinking about sun safety. To find this year's theme look at the Canadian Dermatology website.
- Include sun safety information in the school newsletter or use the [sample newsletter articles](#) on pages 8 - 10. Add the sample sun safety symbols as graphics in your newsletter (included).
- Remember to make trips, play days, bike rodeos and other special events sun safe. Advertise all outdoor play days and special events as sun safe events (see [sample sun safe template](#) on page 11). Have roaming sun safety marshals, to identify the sun safe participants. Have hat and sunscreen reminders in the announcements during the event to remind the students and staff to cover up and reapply sunscreen.
- Remind school staff to practice sun safety. Show the students that you respect the power of the sun and encourage them to follow your example.
- Put sun safety messages around your school. Post sun safety posters at the doors to remind students and staff to cover up on their way out.
- Have “sunscreen breaks”, schedule time for two applications of sunscreen beginning 30 minutes before going outdoors. Discuss in the classroom where students can store their hats and sunscreen.

Sample Newsletter Articles

Sample newsletter articles for use in your school newsletter. Use one or all of them but do not change the content. Included are some “sun safe” graphics to add in your newsletter.

Article # 1

Spring is Finally Here

Sun safety tips

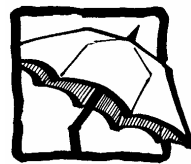
With spring on its way we just can't wait to spend more time outdoors. It feels great to be outside playing with the kids, gardening, participating in our favourite sports or just relaxing. Unfortunately, the sun's rays are not always good for us. Too much sun exposure can result in skin cancer, cataracts and premature ageing of the skin.

The good news is that there are ways to protect yourself and reduce the risk. Here are a few tips to help you and your family enjoy the sun safely:

- **Limit time in the sun between 11 am and 4 pm**
Try to schedule activities when the sun is not at it's strongest.
- **Look for shaded areas or create shade with umbrellas or awnings.**
Have your picnic under the shade of a tree or under an umbrella. If you don't have much shade in your back yard, think about planting a tree.
- **Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible.** (Long –sleeved shirts and long pants are recommended) Try to keep the kids covered up on schools trip or sporting events.
- **Wear a hat with a wide brim or a backflap.**
Everyone can put a hat on. The kids are more likely to wear them if Mom and Dad do.
- **Put on UVA & UVB protective sunglasses**
- **Use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher that protects from both UVA & UVB.**
Remember to apply your sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure. Apply a second time 20 minutes later. Reapply every 2 hours or after swimming, toweling or exercising.



**Be Sun Safe
Check the Time**



**Be Sun Safe
Look for Shade**

Article # 3

Sun and Sports

Spring is when the outdoor baseball and soccer leagues often begin. It is also a great time to remind your budding Olympians to play sun safe.

Teach your athletes to be sun safe by:

Limiting the time spent in the sun.

Try to schedule activities when the sun is not at its strongest. When possible arrange your practices in the early morning or late afternoon.

Looking for shaded areas or creating shaded areas when the kids are at a practice or a game.

It is not always possible to avoid the sun but you can still protect yourself and your children by finding shade. The kids can rest in between quarters, innings or games in the shade.

Dressing for the Sun.

Wear a hat with a wide brim or a flap that covers the back of neck. This shades your face and neck. Wear loose clothing to protect as much of your skin as possible (long sleeved shirt and pants).

Wearing Sunglasses.

Protect your eyes. Choose sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection.

Using Sunscreen.

Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher. Remind your children to apply sunscreen 30 minutes before sun exposure. Apply a second time 20 minutes later. Remember to check the expiry date on the bottle; if you are not sure get a new bottle.

Sample Sun Safe Template

Use this template to advertise all outdoor play days and special events as being sun safe.



**REMEMBER TO COME SUN SAFE:
WIDE BRIM HAT, SUN-SAFE CLOTHING, SUNGLASSES
AND SUNSCREEN**

