

Dermatologists Remind Us that the Sun Doesn't Just Shine at the Beach

Ottawa, June 11, 2016 – This Sun Awareness Week (June 6 to 12) the Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) is asking people to take precautions anytime they are outdoors – even if it is cold, overcast or shady.

“It’s easy to be fooled into thinking there is no risk from the sun on a cool day,” said Dr. Jennifer Beecker, National Spokesperson for the CDA’s Sun Awareness Program. “But temperature has nothing to do with UV risk. For example, it may seem cool if you are hiking at the top of a mountain, but your exposure to the sun in this situation is particularly high.”

The same goes for an overcast day, as light cloud cover does not filter out a significant portion of UV rays. What does this mean? Even if you’re not planning to spend the day at the beach, soccer pitch or gardening in full sunlight, you should still follow standard safety precautions before going outdoors.

Some facts to keep in mind:

- Ever 1,000 metres of altitude increases UV exposure by about 10 per cent. So if you travel from Banff (1,600 metres altitude) to the summit of Mount Temple (3,352 metres altitude) your UV exposure has gone up almost 20 per cent.
- While thick clouds may reduce UV exposure, thin clouds have little effect and may even enhance UV levels because of scattering. Don’t be fooled by an overcast day or a cool breeze.
- Different materials reflect UV radiation at different levels. Grass, and soil reflect less than 10 per cent, sand reflects 15 per cent and fresh snow may actually almost double a person’s UV exposure. So snow on the ground doesn’t mean you can forget about sun safety.

The CDA has “The sun doesn’t just shine at the beach” posters available with different themes – cycling, walking and working. To order them, go to the CDA’s website at dermatology.ca.

While the number of new cases of skin cancer continues to rise, it is one type of cancer that can be prevented by taking simple precautions:

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 Canadian Dermatology Association 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.

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