

Dermatologists Unveil Sun Awareness Educational Kit for Schools

Ottawa, June 8, 2016 – As part of Sun Awareness Week (June 6 to 12) the Canadian Dermatology Association today unveiled an educational kit for schools to help elementary and middle school children make sun safety an early and hopefully lifelong healthy habit.

“Things we learn in childhood stay with us throughout our lives,” said Dr. Jennifer Beecker, National Spokesperson for the CDA’s Sun Awareness Program. “Just as we learn to look for traffic before crossing the street and brush our teeth regularly, we should also be learning vital safety practices that can help avert melanoma later in life.”

The kit is aimed at elementary and middle schools. It features a variety of materials, including:

- An educational PowerPoint presentation
- Videos
- Class resource activities like colouring sheets, word searches, fortune tellers and a board game, bookmarks and stickers.

The kit carries the theme “Be Sun Safe” and features attractive illustrations of children outdoors. It teaches children to wear a “floppy hat” and cover their skin; be especially careful in the sun between 11 am and 3 pm; look for shaded spots to play; use sunscreen and reapply; and to wear sun-protective clothing and sunscreen when swimming.

The goal is to give teachers the tools they need to effectively teach sun safety to their students. A secondary goal is to reach entire families, as children bring home their new knowledge and share it with siblings and parents.

“Children can be wonderful educators,” said Dr. Beecker. “We’ve seen this with good environmental practices that children are learning at school and bringing home, and our hope is that we will also see this with sun safety practices.”

Materials are be available for download or ordering on the CDA website at cda.ca. In addition, the CDA will be contacting schools as they prepare for the 2016/2017 school year to encourage them to make the kit a component of their learning materials.

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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