

With melanoma one of the fastest-rising cancers in Canada, Canadian Dermatology Association stressing the importance of sun-safe behaviours this World Melanoma Day

OTTAWA, Ont., May 14, 2018 – As the world marks World Melanoma day, the Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) urges Canadians to learn about the causes and the early warning signs of this form of skin cancer.

World Melanoma Day is marked annually around the globe and this year it is Monday, May 14th. On this occasion, Canada’s certified dermatologists seek to raise awareness about the simple steps that Canadians can take to minimize melanoma risks, as well as the importance of consulting a physician if they see early signs of this or other types of skin cancer.

“With the incidence of melanoma rising in Canada, sun-safe behaviours are very important for prevention – and because timely treatment saves lives, early detection is also critical,” says CDA President Dr. Julie Powell. “While melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer, it is highly treatable when discovered early.”

Incidence rates of melanoma have increased in both men and women over the past several decades, growing 2.1% per year in men from 1992 to 2013, and 2.0% per year among women. Among all age groups in Canada, there were an estimated 1,240 deaths from melanoma in 2017; 790 men and 450 women.

“Canada may not be thought of as a sunny country, but skin cancer affects one out of seven Canadians and remains the most common cancer diagnosed in Canada,” adds Dr. Jennifer Beecker, National Chair of the CDA’s Sun Awareness Working Group. “Studies also show that one-in-three Canadians over age 18 had a sunburn in the past year, and severe sunburns increase melanoma risk; therefore, we must not be complacent.”

As part of the CDA’s commitment to providing authoritative information to Canadians, Drs. Powell and Beecker will mark World Melanoma Day by answering questions from the public about sun safety and skin cancer prevention, during a special “Facebook Live” session on Monday, May 14 at 1:00 p.m. (ET).

The CDA also stresses that adolescents and young adults need to understand their risks; melanoma is one of the most common types of cancer among Canadians ages 15 to 29.

Incidence of melanoma is also rising in this age group, and melanoma comprised 7% of new cancer cases and 4% of cancer deaths in 2017, among 15–29-year-olds.

PREVENTION

The CDA reminds Canadians to remember to practice the following sun-safe behaviours:

- Avoid the sun as much as possible between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. during summer months when the UV Index is 3 or higher; seek shade or use an umbrella for shade.
- Wear close-fitting wraparound sunglasses or eyeglasses with UV-protective lenses. Look for glasses labelled with the Canadian Dermatology Association logo that guarantees “UV400” or “100% UV protection.”
- Cover your skin as much as possible with clothing that is appropriate for your activity and the weather.
- Use a “broad spectrum” sunscreen with a minimum 30 sun-protection factor (SPF) and reapply as necessary.
- Avoid UV tanning equipment and deliberately trying to get a suntan.
- Top it all off with a wide-brim hat to keep UV radiation off the scalp, face, ears and neck.

EARLY DETECTION

While increasing incidence rates are a cause for concern, melanoma is easily treated if caught early. The five-year survival rate for females with melanoma is 92% and males, 85%.

Early detection is a key to a good prognosis and everyone should regularly perform a skin check, and [see a certified dermatologist](#) if they spot something suspicious.

While people may be unsure how best to check their skin, using the “ABCDEs” is a simple way to remember the key characteristics that could identify a potential case of melanoma:

A- “Asymmetry” – the shape of a mole is different on one side;

B- “Border” – the borders of the mole are irregular, jagged and imprecise.

C- “Colour” – mole colour varies with brown, black, red, grey or white areas within the lesion;

D- “Diameter” – a large size (more than 6mm) can be typical of melanoma;

E- “Evolution – a mole has changed or grown.

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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 www.dermatology.ca or join the conversation on www.Twitter.com/CdnDermatology or www.Facebook.com/CdnDermatology

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