

Teens need to protect their skin from the sun

Ottawa, May 31, 2018 – The Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) is warning teens to be “sun smart” as they head outside to enjoy the warm weather during their summer vacation.

“After one of Canada’s typical long, cold winters, most teens can’t wait to get out in the sun at the cottage, beach, or by the pool when the weather warms up,” says Dr. Jennifer Beecker, National Chair of the CDA Sun Awareness Working Group. “Unfortunately, too many kids still underestimate the dangers that the sun poses to their skin.”

New public opinion research conducted for the CDA as part of the 2018 Canadian Sun Awareness Week running from May 28 to June 3 highlights the lack of awareness of the sun’s dangers among 16- and 17-year-olds:

- Only slightly more than one in five (22%) survey respondents worry that increased sun exposure will lead to premature aging;
- Just over half (54%) respondents fear increased sun exposure could lead to skin cancer;
- Fear of sunburn, however, was a top concern cited by nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents.

“This year Sun Awareness Week hopes to cut through the aura of invincibility many teens have when it comes to being out in the sun,” added Dr. Beecker. “Canada’s certified dermatologists want young people to understand that taking just a few precautions now is critical to helping avoid serious skin damage – and even melanoma – later in life.”

The CDA continues to strongly recommend that teens do not use indoor tanning facilities. The ultraviolet radiation from these lamps causes premature aging and increases the risk of [skin cancer](#), including melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. For important information on the incidence and dangers of melanoma visit dermatology.ca/statistics. All Canadian provinces have passed legislation prohibiting the use of tanning beds by minors.

Indoor tanning before the age of 35 has been associated with a significant increase in the risk of melanoma, and recently UV tanning beds were moved up to the highest cancer risk category—group 1— ‘carcinogenic to humans’ by the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer, similar to smoking and lung cancer.

“We know that many teens and young Canadians – particularly young women – think indoor tanning will help protect their skin from burning in the sun,” said Dr. Beecker. “The fact is that a tan offers very little protection from sunlight or burning, and the dangers of tanning beds can be lethal.”

Questions for the CDA Sun Awareness Survey were fielded on Ipsos Canadian online omnibus between Sept. 5 and 8, 2017 to a representative sample of 1051 Canadians age 16 year and over. A sample of this size yields a credibility interval of +/- 3.4%, 19 times out of 20.

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, May 28 to Sunday, June 3, 2018.

About the CDA

The Canadian Dermatology Association, founded in 1925, represents Canadian certified dermatologists. The association provides easy access to a 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 dermatology.ca or join the conversation on twitter.com/CdnDermatology, facebook.com/CdnDermatology, or instagram.com/canadiandermatologyassociation/.

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For further information please contact:

Nimmi Lawrence, Officer, Marketing and Communications: (613) 738-1748 ext. 228 nlawrence@dermatology.ca