

UV Exposure — A Growing Risk for Canadians Working Outdoors

OTTAWA, June, 2, 2018 – The Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) and Sun Safety at Work Canada are continuing their efforts to educate employers and employees who work outdoors about the hazards of regular UV exposure.

Daily exposure to heat and solar UV radiation puts outdoor workers at an increased risk for heat stress, skin damage, sunburn, skin cancer, cataracts, and other eye conditions.

“Because skin cancer is largely preventable, employers who make sun safety a core component of their occupational health and safety programs can protect their workers from the health risks related to occupational sun exposure,” says Dr. Jennifer Beecker, National Chair of the CDA Sun Awareness Working Group. “Working outside during peak hours for UV exposure means these Canadians need to practice sun safety even more rigorously.”

Spreading and Sharing Sun Safety

Here are some sun safety facts that employers, managers, and employees need to know:

- The highest amount of UV radiation in the day occurs between 11 am and 3 pm.
- Overcast skies don't mean there's no risk—up to 80% of UV radiation can pass through clouds.
- Sunlight doesn't have to be direct to do damage. Light reflected off surfaces such as sand, water, concrete, and snow can also cause damage. Reflected ultraviolet light (UV) is a particular hazard for the eyes.
- A tan is actually an indication of skin damage. No matter your skin colour, you are still at risk of developing skin cancer.
- Working in the shade, wearing a hat and lightweight, loose-fitting clothing that covers your skin is the best form of protection.
- Apply sunscreen generously to areas of skin not covered by clothing.
- Sunscreens deteriorate in extreme heat, so store yours away from sources of heat.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent can be used together; apply sunscreen first, then the repellent.

Finally, self-detection is key. Canadians working outdoors are encouraged to regularly preform a self-examination. 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” – growth is typical of melanoma

E- “Evolution” – a mole has changed

If a suspicious lesion is spotted, consult your family physician; they can refer you to a certified dermatologist.

Visit dermatology.ca/sun-safety-at-work or sunsafetyatwork.ca for more information and resources to help you build your own sun safety program.

The Sun Safety at Work Canada project was funded through financial support from Health Canada through the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, as a Coalitions Linking Action & Science for Prevention (CLASP). It is a research, policy, and practice partnership between Ryerson University, Occupational Cancer Research Centre at Cancer Care Ontario, Alberta Health Services, Canadian Cancer Society Nova Scotia, Canadian Dermatology Association, CAREX Canada, Occupational Health Nurses Association of Nova Scotia, Sun Safe Nova Scotia Coalition, and WorkSafe BC.

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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