



Ipsos Public Affairs

Canadian  
Dermatology  
Association



Association  
canadienne de  
dermatologie

# Sun Awareness Survey

CANADIAN DERMATOLOGY ASSOCIATION

September 2019

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# Methodology

The Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) commissioned Ipsos to conduct an online survey of Canadians age 16+.

The questions were fielded on Ipsos' Canadian online omnibus between September 6 and 12, 2019 to a representative sample of n=1,228 Canadians age 16+. A sample of this size yields a credibility interval of +/- 3.2%, 19 times out of 20.

The final data was weighted according to the latest census data on age, gender, and region. Sub sets of the population will have smaller sample sizes and larger credibility intervals.

Where appropriate, results have been tracked from the September 2018, September 2017, October 2016 and April 2015 surveys. Note: the seasonality of each field window is different (2015 conducted prior to summer, 2016 conducted after summer, 2017 and 2018 conducted in early September), therefore changes between waves should be interpreted in this context.

# Key Findings

- Consistent with previous years, sunburn and increased risk of skin cancer are top concerns for Canadians when exposing themselves to the sun. In fact, worry around the increased risk of cancer has reached a record high since tracking began (+5 pts) and concern is highest among those aged 55+.
  - Women continue to be more concerned than men about risks related to sun exposure, especially in terms of increasing risk of skin cancer, premature skin aging, increasing brown sun spots, skin reaction due to sun allergies, freckles, and acne.
- Concern with the environment is evident as there is increased importance of sunscreen being environmentally friendly (84%, +7 pts) and increased agreement that sunscreen may damage the environment (60%, +5 pts). Even so, only 26% say that the impact sunscreen has on the environment deters them from using it.
- Only 3 in 10 Canadians are correctly able to identify the difference between UVA and UVB rays as 4 in 10 misidentify one for the other, and another 3 in 10 say they don't know.
  - This presents an opportunity to build awareness of knowledge around UV rays.
- In line with previous waves, over 9 in 10 Canadians agree that a little sun exposure can be good for health, that too much sun ages your skin, and that it is essential to protect your skin from the sun.
- However, there is a decline in the proportion of Canadians who find sunscreen safe to use (81% -4 pts), who are concerned about sun damage from UV rays (78%, -4 pts), and who avoid sun exposure during peak hours (53%, -6pts).
- Positively, while it was already low, there is a decline in agreement with misinformation such as there is no need to use sunscreen when it is cloudy (25%, -4pts), sun protection in the winter is unnecessary (24% -5pts), sunscreen is not important for tan skin (24%, -4pts) and getting a sun burn is the first step to a sun tan (18%, -5pts).

# Key Findings

- The proportion of Canadians who use sunscreen all year round has declined since last year (21%, -5 pts) and only 15% use it daily (-3pts), though daily usage is significantly higher among those with a skin condition (22%). In a similar vein, only half of Canadians look for products with SPF, at its lowest since tracking began (54%, -6 pts).

# CONCERNS OF SUN EXPOSURE

In line with previous years, the top three concerns related to sun exposure include sunburn, increased risk of skin cancer, and premature skin aging. Concern with the risk of skin cancer has increased and is at its highest since tracking began, while tanning and skin reactions from sun allergies are now less of a concern.

		2018	2017	2016	2015
Sunburn	 <b>65%</b>	65%	62%	64%	65%
Increasing the risk of skin cancer	 <b>64%</b> ↑	59%	61%	59%	56%
Premature skin aging	 <b>41%</b>	39%	43%	38%	34%
Increasing brown sun spots	 <b>29%</b>	28%	30%	25%	26%
Peeling skin	 <b>19%</b>	21%	18%	17%	17%
Skin reaction due to sun allergies	 <b>11%</b> ↓	14%	11%	11%	9%
Tanning	 <b>11%</b> ↓	14%	6%	6%	6%
Freckles	 <b>8%</b>	10%	10%	9%	6%
Acne breakouts	 <b>8%</b>	9%	7%	7%	5%
Other	 <b>1%</b> ↓	3%	2%	2%	3%
Not concerned	 <b>9%</b>	11%	12%	13%	17%

3. When you expose yourself to the sun, what, if anything are you concerned about?  
 Base: All respondents Apr '15 (n=1064); Oct '16 (n=1180); Sept '17 (n=1051); Sept'18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

 Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

# RISKS OF SUN EXPOSURE BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Women continue to be more concerned with sun exposure, compared to men. Canadians aged 55 and older are most concerned about the risks of skin cancer. Teens are least likely to be concerned with premature skin aging but most likely to be concerned with skin reactions due to sun allergies. Canadians under the age of 35 are more concerned with tanning and acne breakouts.

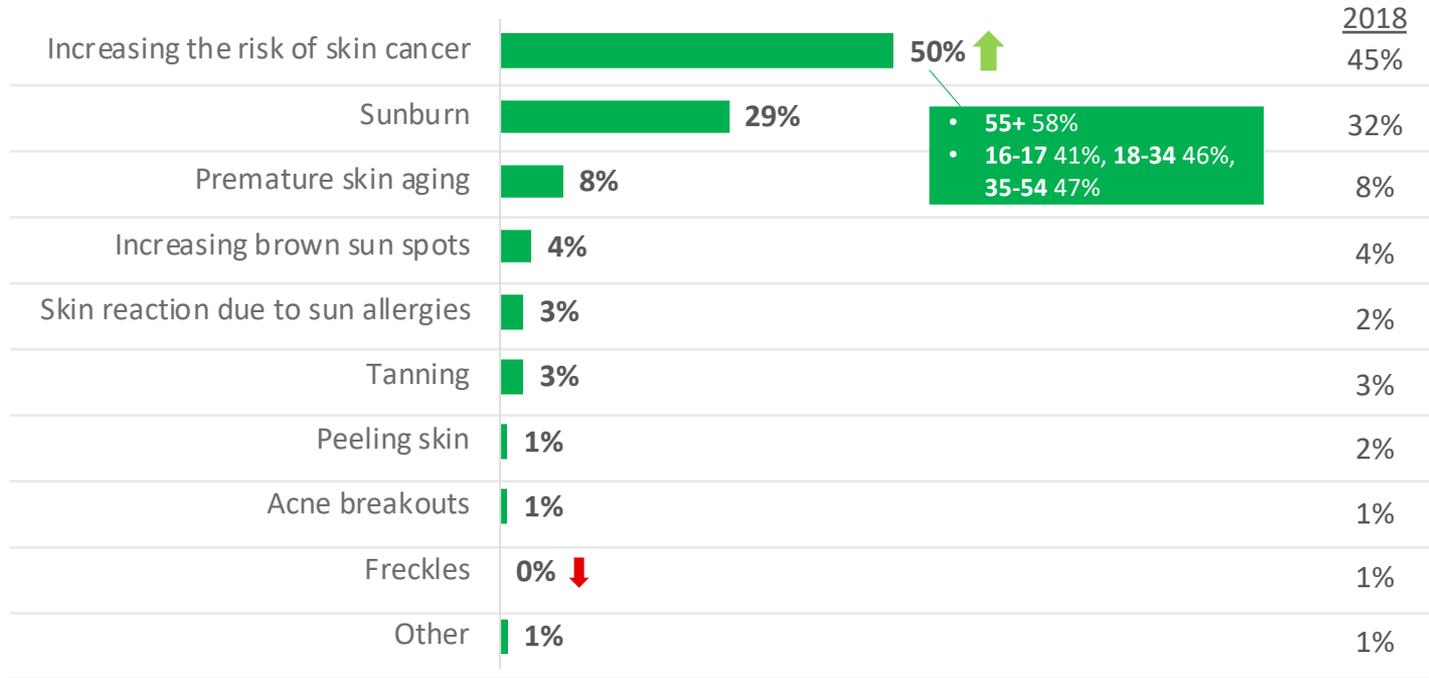
	Total	Gender		Age			
		Male A	Female B	16-17 C	18-34 D	35-54 E	55+ F
Sunburn	65%	63%	67%	73%	64%	66%	64%
Increasing the risk of skin cancer	64%	60%	67% A	52%	64%	61%	68% CF
Premature skin aging	41%	30%	51% A	23%	39% C	44% C	41% C
Increasing brown sun spots	29%	21%	37% A	23%	28%	28%	31%
Peeling skin	19%	20%	19%	27% F	26% F	20% F	14%
Skin reaction due to sun allergies	11%	7%	15% A	20% DE	8%	11%	13%
Tanning	11%	11%	12%	15% EF	23% EF	8%	5%
Freckles	8%	6%	11% A	18% EF	11% F	10% F	4%
Acne Breakouts	8%	6%	10% A	19% EF	17% EF	7% F	1%
Other	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Not concerned	9%	11% B	6%	9% D	4%	11% D	10% D

Where a percentage is followed by a letter, the letter indicates that the percentage is statistically significantly higher than the percentage shown in the column associated with the letter. For example, Canadians age 16-17 (17%), 18-34 (13%), and 35-54 (14%) are more likely to say they are afraid of freckles when exposing themselves to the sun - this is significantly higher than the percentage of Canadians age 55+.

3. When you expose yourself to the sun, what, if anything are you afraid of?  
Base: All respondents Sept '19 (n=1228)

# CONCERNS OF SUN EXPOSURE

Among Canadians concerned with sun exposure, they continue to be most concerned about the risk of skin cancer, with concern growing further since last year. Canadians aged 55+ are once again most likely to indicate this is their biggest concern, compared to younger Canadians.



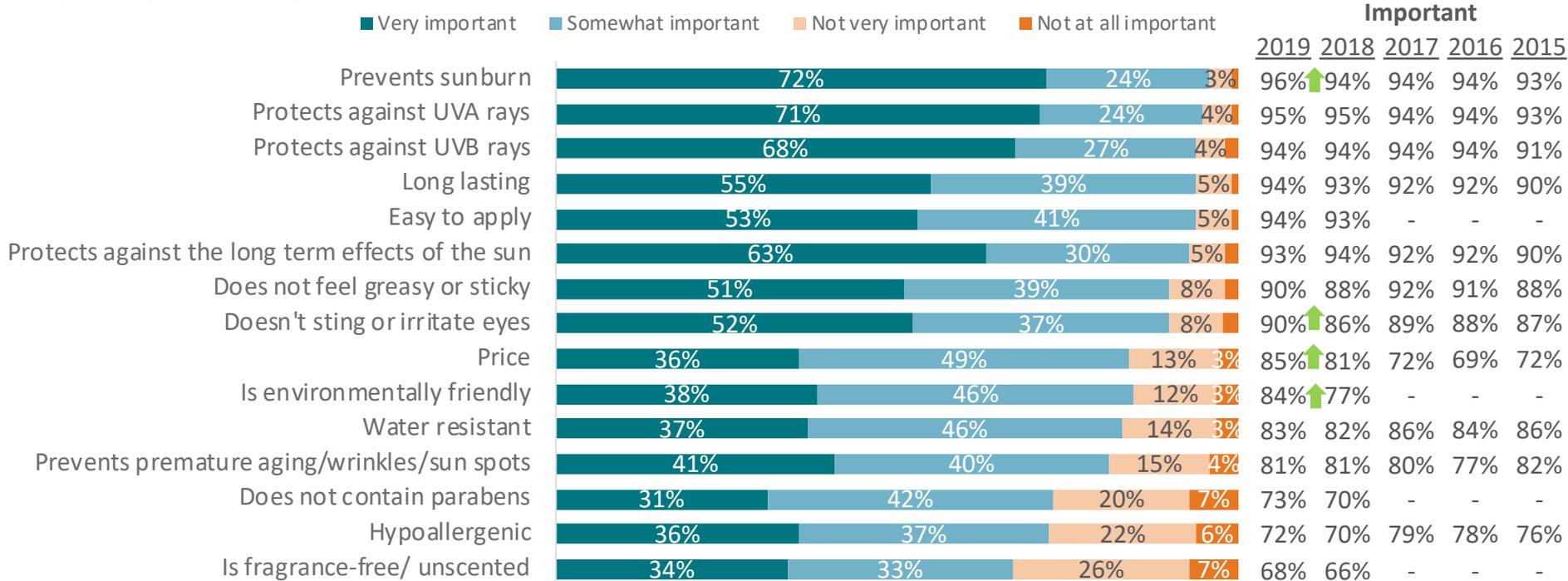
3a. And what are you most concerned about when it comes to exposing yourself to the sun?  
 Base: Sept'18 – concerned about sun exposure (n=1067); Sept '19 (n=1113)

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↑↓ Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

# IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTERISTICS OF SUNSCREEN

Consistent with previous years, all characteristics of sunscreen are seen as important. Importance of the price of sunscreen continues to grow year over year, and it is also increasingly important that sunscreen prevents sunburn, does not sting or irritate eyes and is environmentally friendly. Those with skin conditions are more likely to find it important that it is easy to apply, does not contain parabens, is hypoallergenic, and fragrance free.



Responses less than 3% not labeled

\*Statements added or changed in Sept 2019

4. Generally speaking, which of the following characteristics is important to you in a sun protection or sunscreen product?

Base: All respondents Apr '15 (n=1064); Oct '16 (n=1180); Sept '17 (n=1051); Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

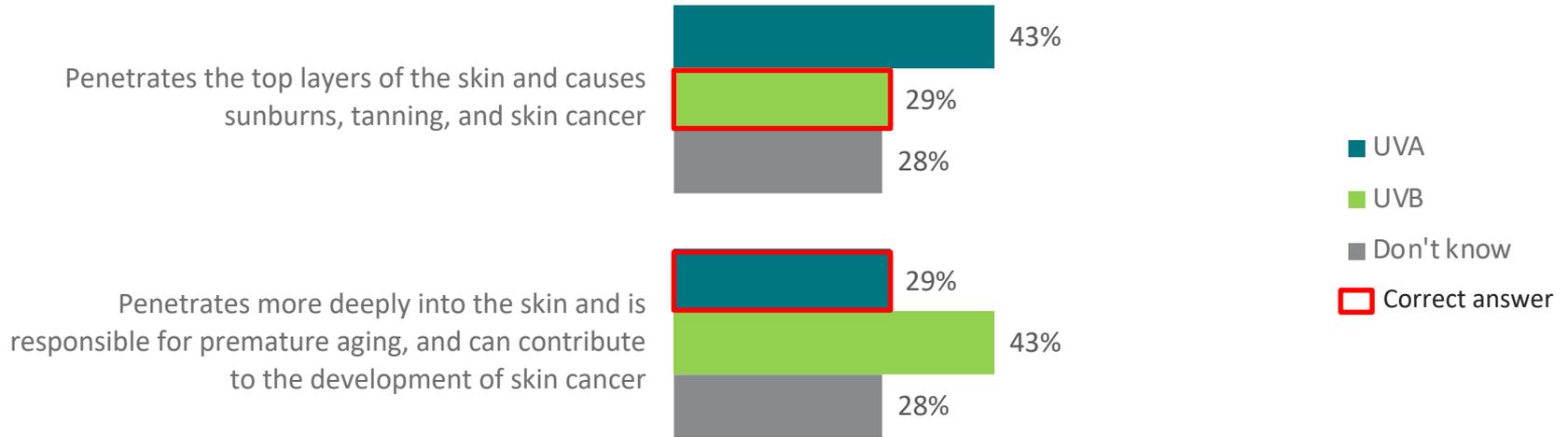


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# KNOWLEDGE OF UV RAYS

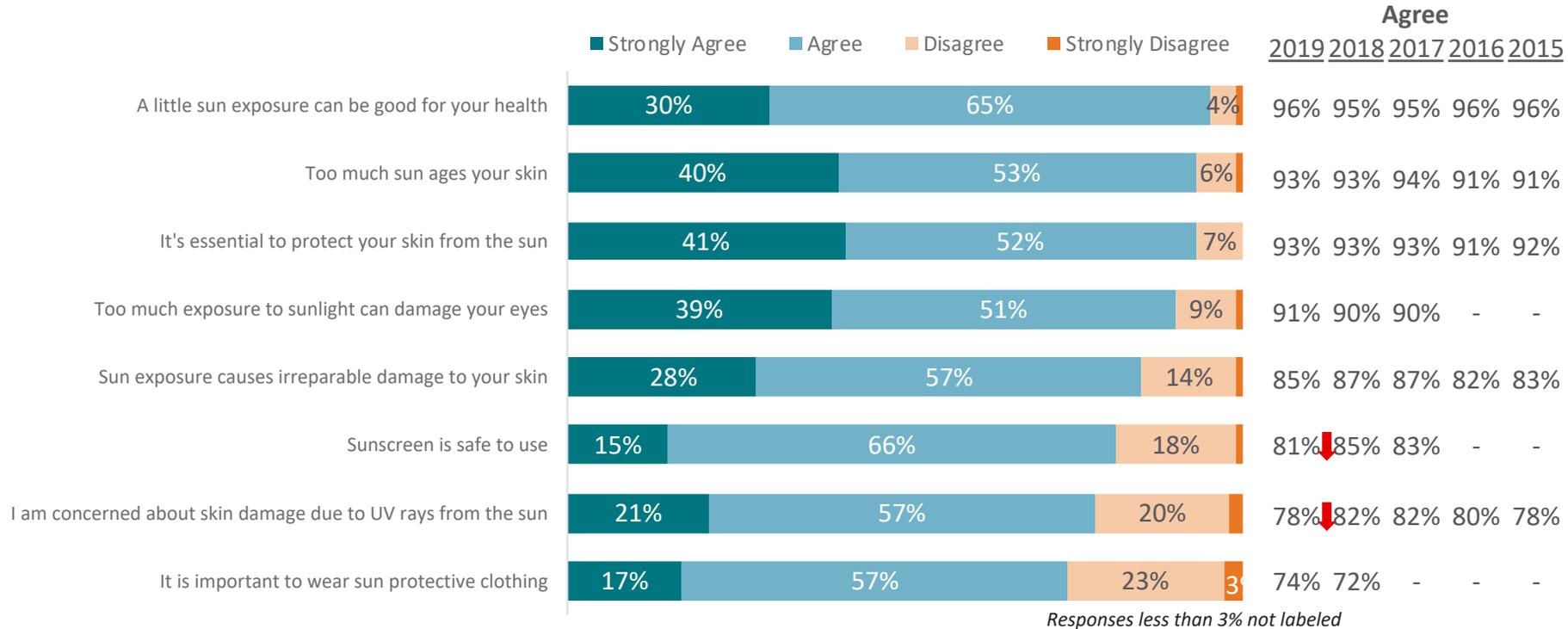
Only 3 in 10 Canadians are able to correctly identify the difference between UVA and UVB. Four in 10 misidentify the two types of rays, mistaking one for the other while another 3 in 10 say they don't know.



4a. There are many different types of rays in sunlight, however the rays that are most damaging to skin are called ultraviolet (UV) rays. There are two types of UV rays – UVB and UVA. To the best of your knowledge, please match UVA and UVB rays with the statements below that describe them. Base: Sept '19 (n=1228)

# ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SUN AND SUN PROTECTION

Consistent with previous years, nearly all Canadians agree that a little sun exposure can be good for your health but that too much sun ages your skin and that it is essential to protect your skin from the sun. However, since last year, fewer Canadians find sunscreen to be safe to use and there is also a decrease in the proportion concerned about skin damage due to UV rays.



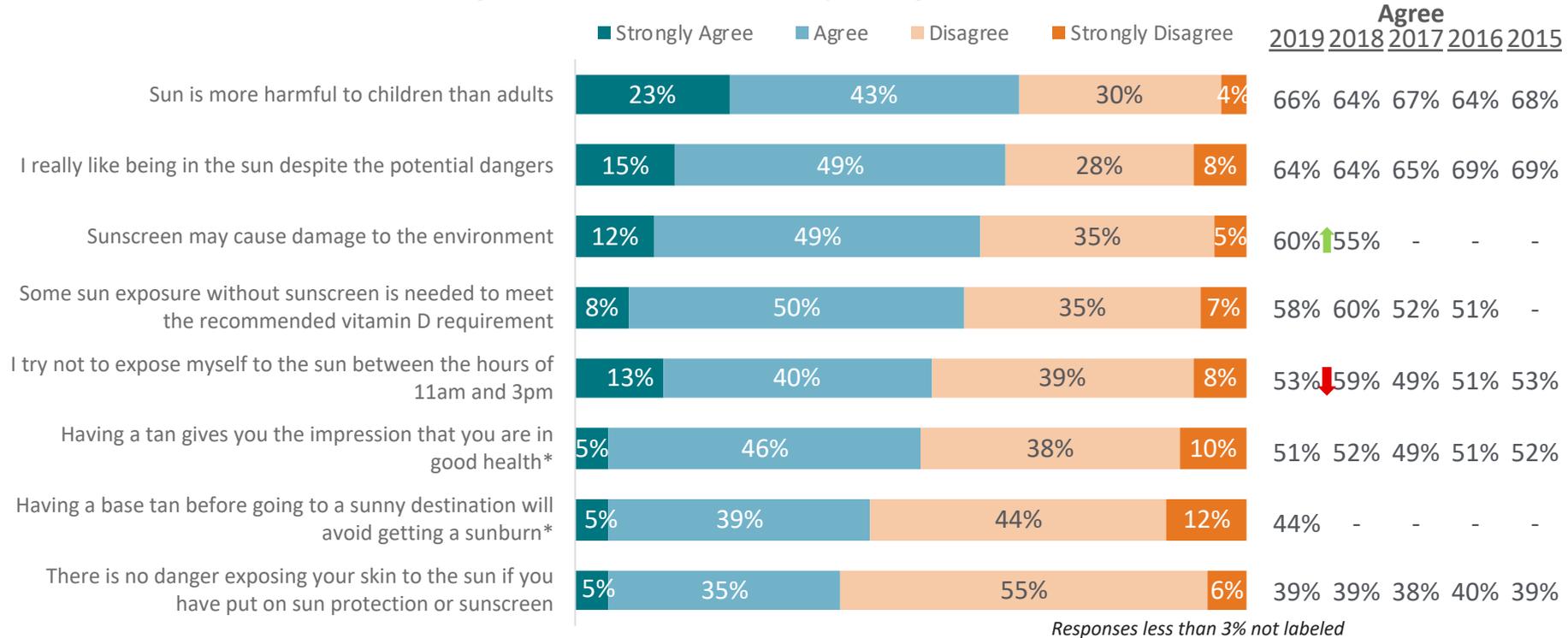
5/6/7. How strongly would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?  
 Base: All respondents Apr '15 (n=1064); Oct '16 (n=1180); Sept '17 (n=1051); Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

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↑ ↓ Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

# ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SUN AND SUN PROTECTION

Two thirds agree the sun is more harmful to children than adults and that they like being in the sun despite potential dangers. Following a significant increase between 2017 and 2018, this year agreement has fallen with trying to avoid sun exposure during peak hours. There is also an increase in agreement that sunscreen may damage the environment.



Responses less than 3% not labeled

\*Statements added or changed in Sept 2019

5/6/7. How strongly would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?  
 Base: All respondents Apr '15 (n=1064); Oct '16 (n=1180); Sept '17 (n=1051); Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

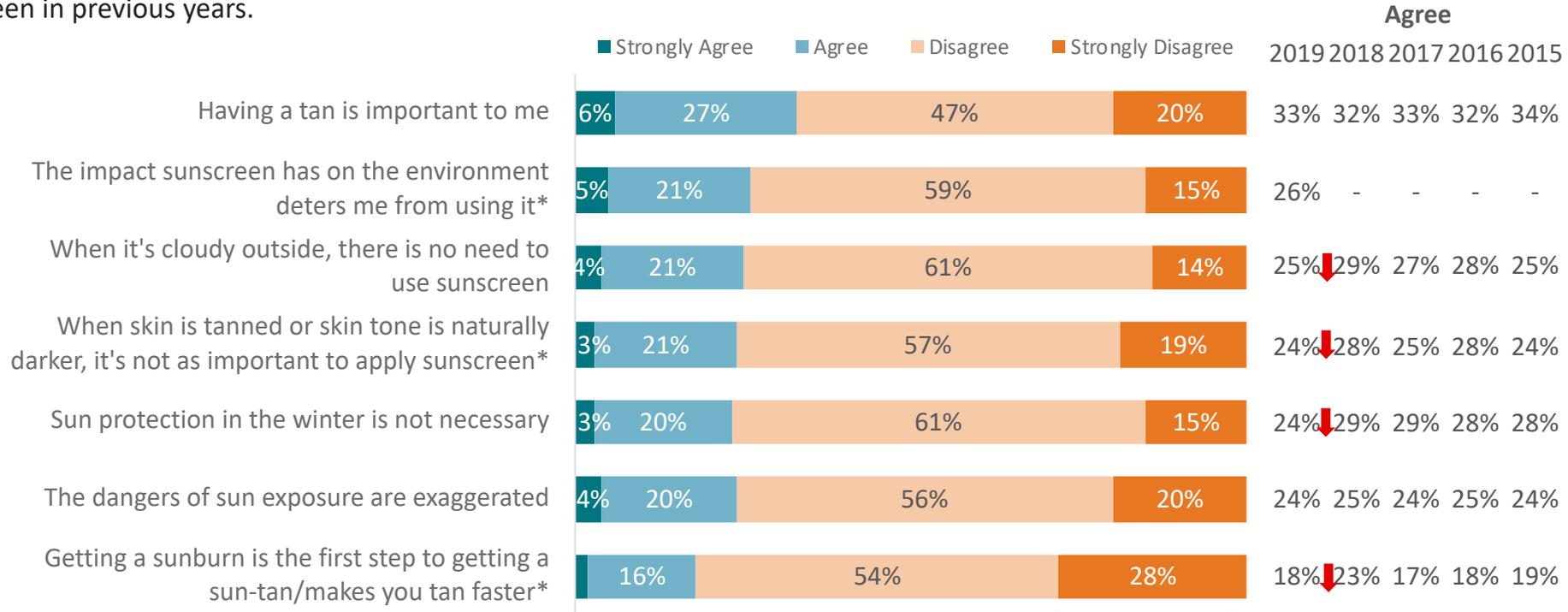


Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018



# ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SUN AND SUN PROTECTION

Fewer Canadians agree with misinformation such as there is no need to use sunscreen when it is cloudy, that it is not important for tan skin to apply sunscreen, or that it is unnecessary to use sun protection in the winter. Though 2018 had seen concerning increase in agreement that getting a sunburn is the first step to getting a sun tan, positively, agreement has returned to levels seen in previous years.



Responses less than 3% not labeled

\*Statements added or changed in Sept 2019

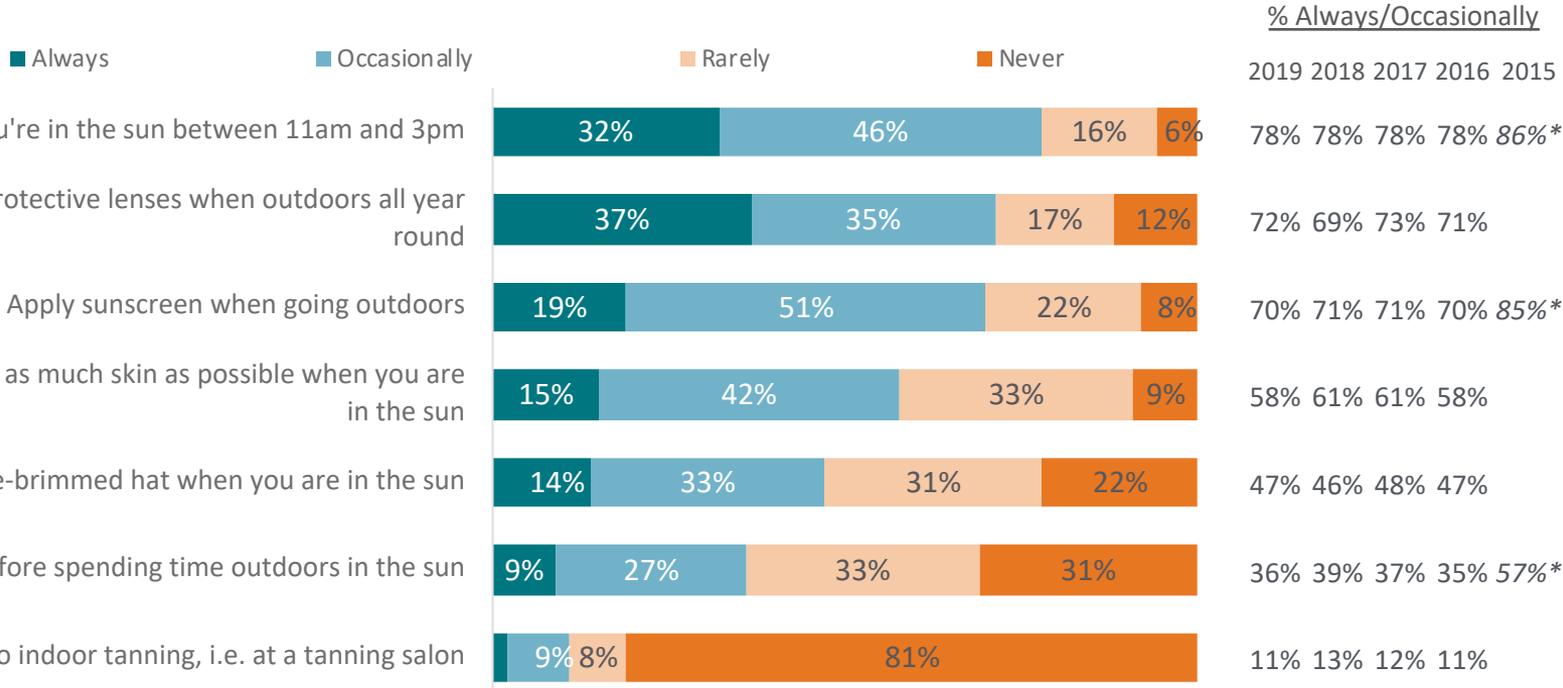
↑ ↓ Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

7. How strongly would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?  
 Base: All respondents Apr '15 (n=1064); Oct '16 (n=1180); Sept '17 (n=1051); Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)



# FREQUENCY OF SUN PROTECTION BEHAVIOURS

On par with previous years, 8 in 10 Canadians seek shade in peak sun hours. After seeing a dip last year, three-quarters of Canadians now wear sunglasses with UV protective lenses all year round, consistent with previous years. Though 7 in 10 Canadians apply sunscreen when going outdoors, only 2 in 10 *always* do so.



8. How often do you...?

Base: All respondents Oct '2016 (n=1180) ; Sept '17 (n=1051) ; Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept'19 (n=1228)

↑ ↓ Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

\*Tracking results from 2015. Note: different scale in 2015 "always, occasionally, never". Use caution when comparing 2016 and 2015 results.

# FREQUENCY OF SUN PROTECTION BEHAVIOURS

Though only a third of Canadians check the UV index before spending time in the sun, those who have a skin condition are more likely to do so than those who do not.

	Total	Skin Condition	
		Yes - have skin condition A	No - do not have skin condition B
Seek shade when you're in the sun between 11am and 3pm	78%	81%	76%
Wear sunglasses with UV protective lenses when outdoors all year round	72%	72%	72%
Apply sunscreen when going outdoors	70%	70%	70%
Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible when you are in the sun	58%	58%	57%
Wear a wide-brimmed hat when you are in the sun	47%	48%	47%
Check the UV index before spending time outdoors in the sun	36%	43% B	33%
Go indoor tanning, i.e. at a tanning salon	11%	13%	10%

Where a percentage is followed by a letter, the letter indicates that the percentage is statistically significantly higher than the percentage shown in the column associated with the letter. For example, 74% of Canadians with a skin condition say they wear sunglasses with UV protective lenses when outdoors all year round - this is significantly higher than the percentage of those who do not have a skin condition (67%).

8. How often do you...?

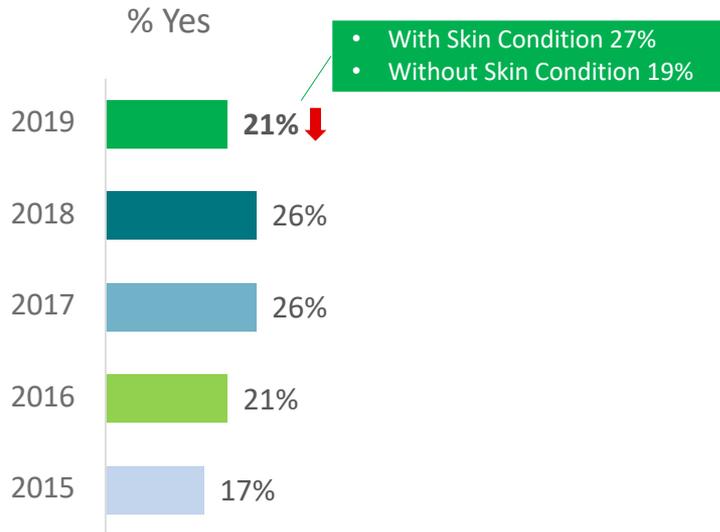
Base: All respondents Sept '19 (n=1228)

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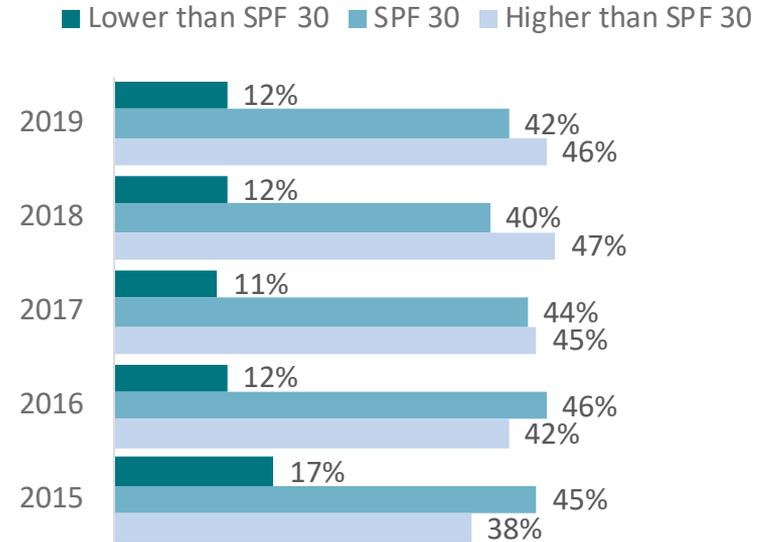
# USING AND APPLYING SUNSCREEN

Two in 10 Canadians use sunscreen all year round, which is down from last year. Those with a skin condition are more likely to use it year round. When applying sunscreen, nearly all Canadians use sunscreen with an SPF factor of 30 or higher.

## Do you use sunscreen all year round?



## When applying sunscreen what SPF factor do you use?



9. When applying sunscreen what SPF factor do you use?

10. Do you use sunscreen all year round?

Base: All respondents Apr '15 (n=1064); Oct '16 (n=1180); Sep '17 (n=1051); Sep '18 (n=1204); Sep '19 (n=1228)

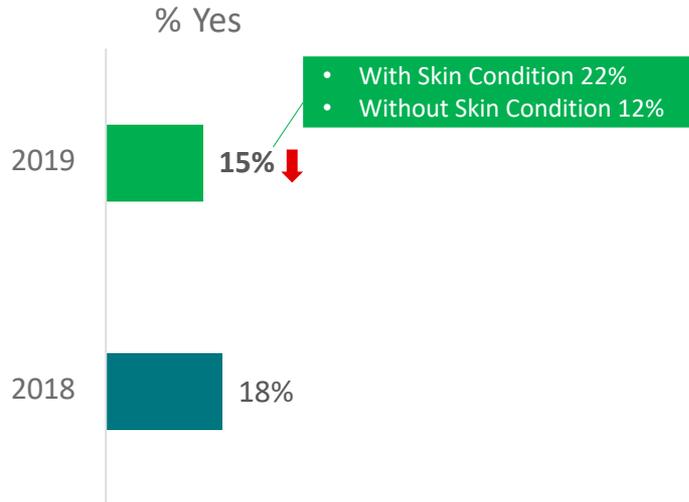
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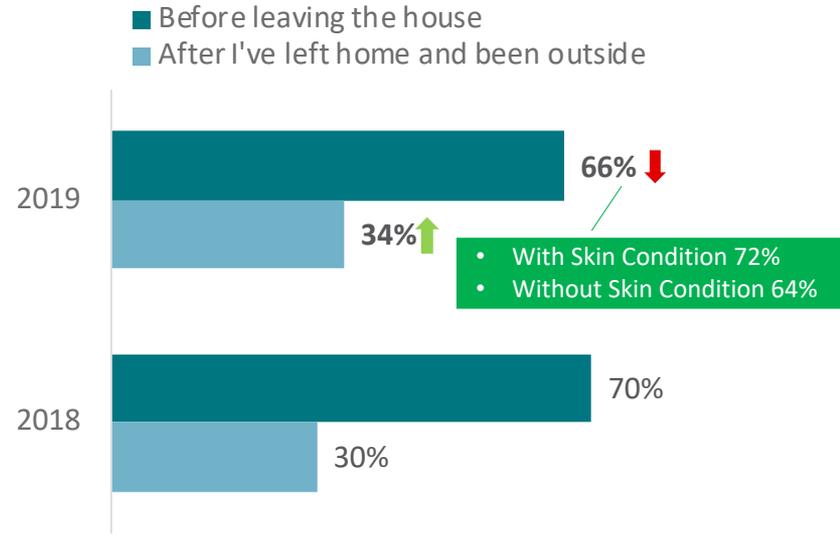
# USAGE OF SUNSCREEN

Fifteen percent of Canadians use sunscreen daily, a decline since last year. However, daily usage is significantly higher among those with a skin condition. Two thirds apply sunscreen before leaving the house, however, the proportion has declined since last year.

## Do you use sunscreen daily?



## Do you usually apply sunscreen for the first time...



10a. Do you use sunscreen daily?

10b. On an average day, do you usually apply sunscreen for the first time...

Base: All respondents Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

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↑↓ Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

# APPLICATION OF SUNSCREEN BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Women are more likely to use sunscreen year round, daily, and before leaving the house. Those aged 18-54 are more likely than those 55+ to use sunscreen year round. In fact, those aged 55+ are least likely (vs. under 55) to use sunscreen daily. Those aged 18-34 also more likely than both teenagers (16-17) and those aged 55+ to apply sunscreen before leaving the house.

	Total	Gender		Age			
		Male A	Female B	16-17 C	18-34 D	35-54 E	55+ F
Do you use sunscreen all year round? % Yes	21%	16%	26% A	25%	24% F	23% F	17%
Do you use sunscreen daily? %Yes	15%	8%	22% A	16% F	23% F	16% F	9%
Do you usually apply sunscreen for the first time... %Before leaving the house	66%	57%	75% A	60%	74% CF	67%	61%

Where a percentage is followed by a letter, the letter indicates that the percentage is statistically significantly higher than the percentage shown in the column associated with the letter. For example, 74% of female Canadians say they apply sunscreen for the first time before leaving the house - this is significantly higher than the percentage of males (65%).

10. Do you use sunscreen all year round?

10a. Do you use sunscreen daily?

10b. On an average day, do you usually apply sunscreen for the first time...

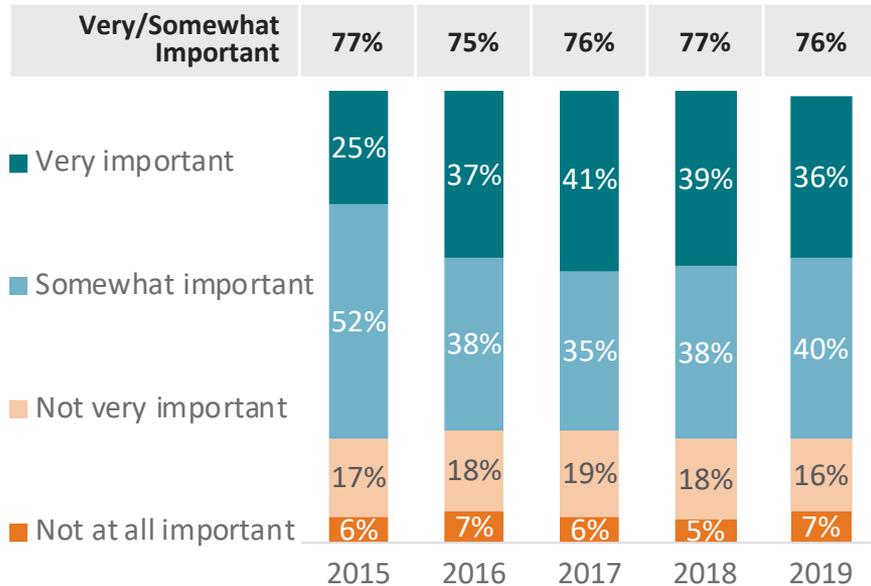
Base: All respondents Sept '19 (n=1228)

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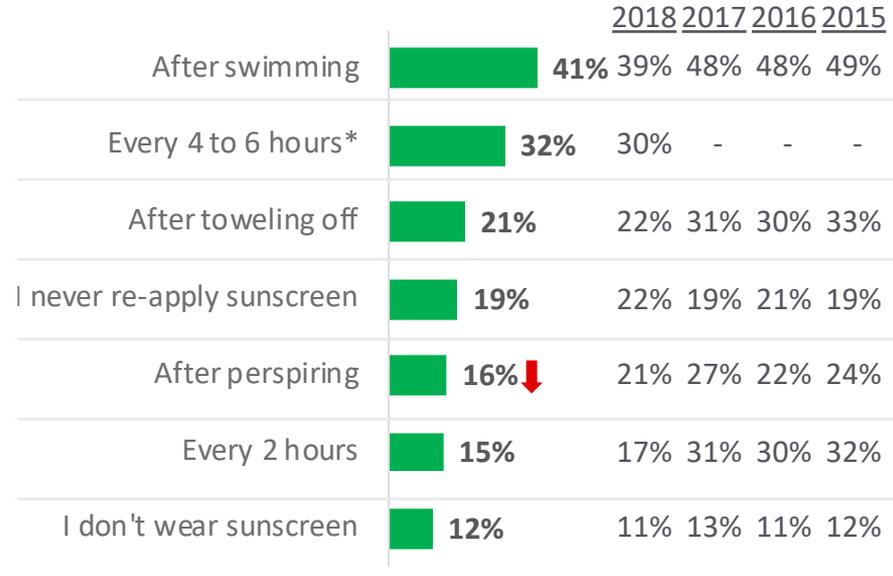
# USING AND APPLYING SUNSCREEN

Three-quarters find it personally important to wear sunscreen when going outdoors, consistent with previous years. Four in 10 Canadians reapply sunscreen after swimming while a third do so every 4 to 6 hours. Since last year, fewer Canadians reapply after perspiring.

Personal Importance of Sunscreen



When do you reapply sunscreen?



Responses less than 3% not labeled

2. How important is it that you personally wear sunscreen when going outdoors?

11. When do you reapply sunscreen?

Base: All Respondents Apr '15 (n=1064); Oct '16 (n=1180); Sep '17 (n=1051); Sep '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

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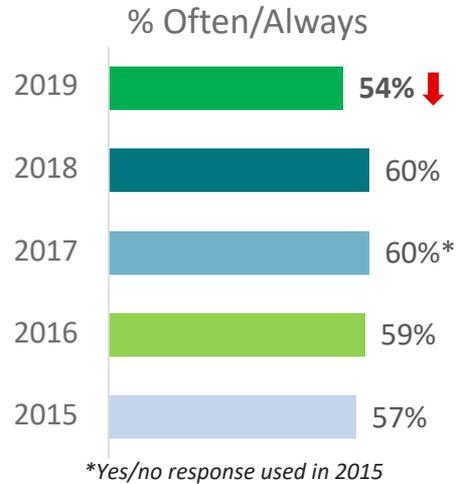
↑ ↓ Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018



# PURCHASING SUNSCREEN OR SUN PROTECTION

When purchasing skin care products, only half of Canadians look for products with SPF, at its lowest since tracking began.

## Look for Products with SPF



12. When purchasing skin care products and cosmetics do you look for products with an SPF?  
Base: All Respondents Sept '15 (n=1064); Sept '16 (n=1180); Sept '17 (n=1051); Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

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Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

Canadian Dermatology Association



Association canadienne de dermatologie



## PURCHASING SUNSCREEN OR SUN PROTECTION BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Those aged 35 to 54 are more likely than those 55 or older to look for products with SPF when purchasing skin care.

	Total	Gender		Age			
		Male A	Female B	16-17 C	18-34 D	35-54 E	55+ F
Do you look for products with SPF? % Always/Often	54%	51%	57%	51%	51%	59% F	52%

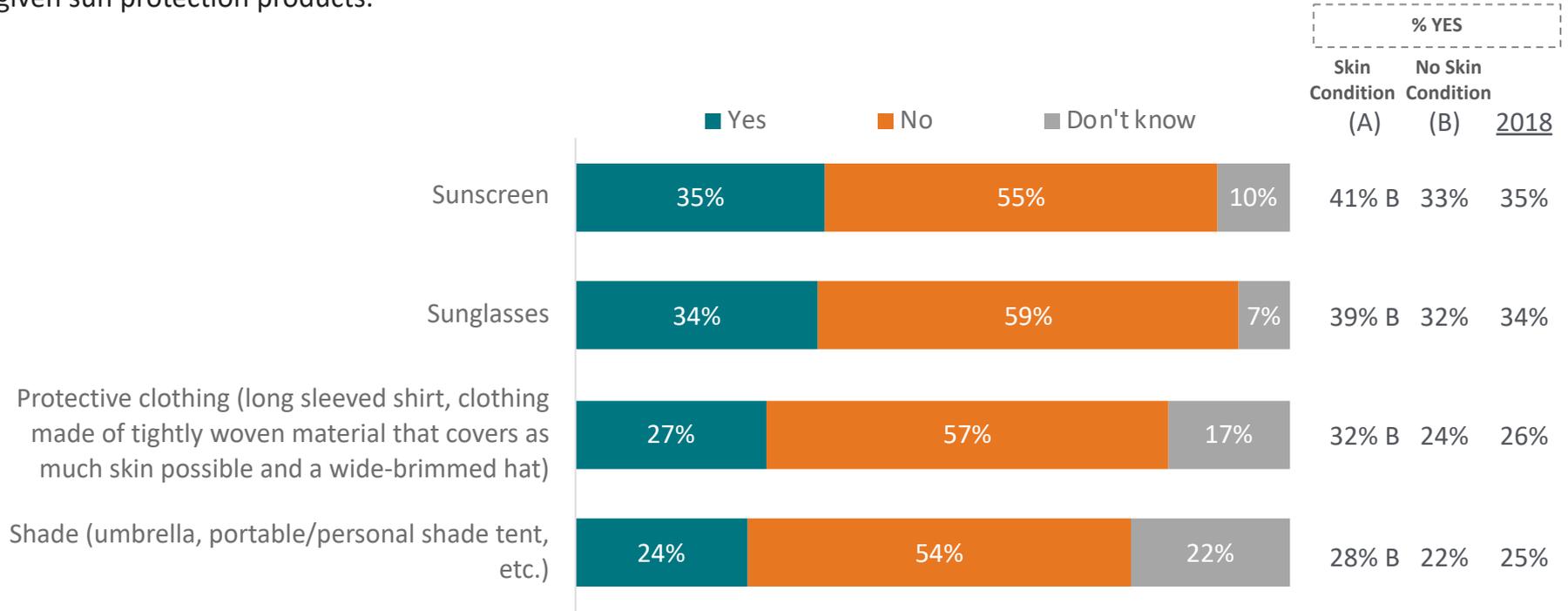
Where a percentage is followed by a letter, the letter indicates that the percentage is statistically significantly higher than the percentage shown in the column associated with the letter. For example, 66% of female Canadians say they look for products with an SPF - this is significantly higher than the percentage of males (52%).

12. When purchasing skin care products and cosmetics do you look for products with an SPF?  
Base: All Respondents Sept '19 (n=xxx)

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# PRICE OF SUN PROTECTION PRODUCTS

Though nearly 9 in 10 Canadians indicate that price is an important characteristic of sun protection products, half or more Canadians indicate that price has not actually stopped them for buying sun protection products. Those with a skin condition seem to be more sensitive to price, as they are more likely to indicate that price has stopped them from purchasing all of the given sun protection products.



11c. Has price ever stopped you from purchasing any of the following products?  
 Base: All respondents Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

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Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

# PRICE OF SUN PROTECTION PRODUCTS BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Those aged 18 to 34 are most likely to say that price has stopped them from buying sun protection products.

%Yes	Total	Gender		Age			
		Male A	Female B	16-17 C	18-34 D	35-54 E	55+ F
Sunscreen	35%	33%	38%	29%	46% CF	37% F	26%
Sunglasses	34%	33%	35%	35% F	48% CEF	36% F	21%
Protective clothing	27%	25%	28%	20%	37% CF	30% F	16%
Shade	24%	23%	25%	24% F	37% CEF	27% F	11%

Where a percentage is followed by a letter, the letter indicates that the percentage is statistically significantly higher than the percentage shown in the column associated with the letter. For example, 63% of female Canadians say they conduct self-examinations of their skin- this is significantly higher than the percentage of males (52%).

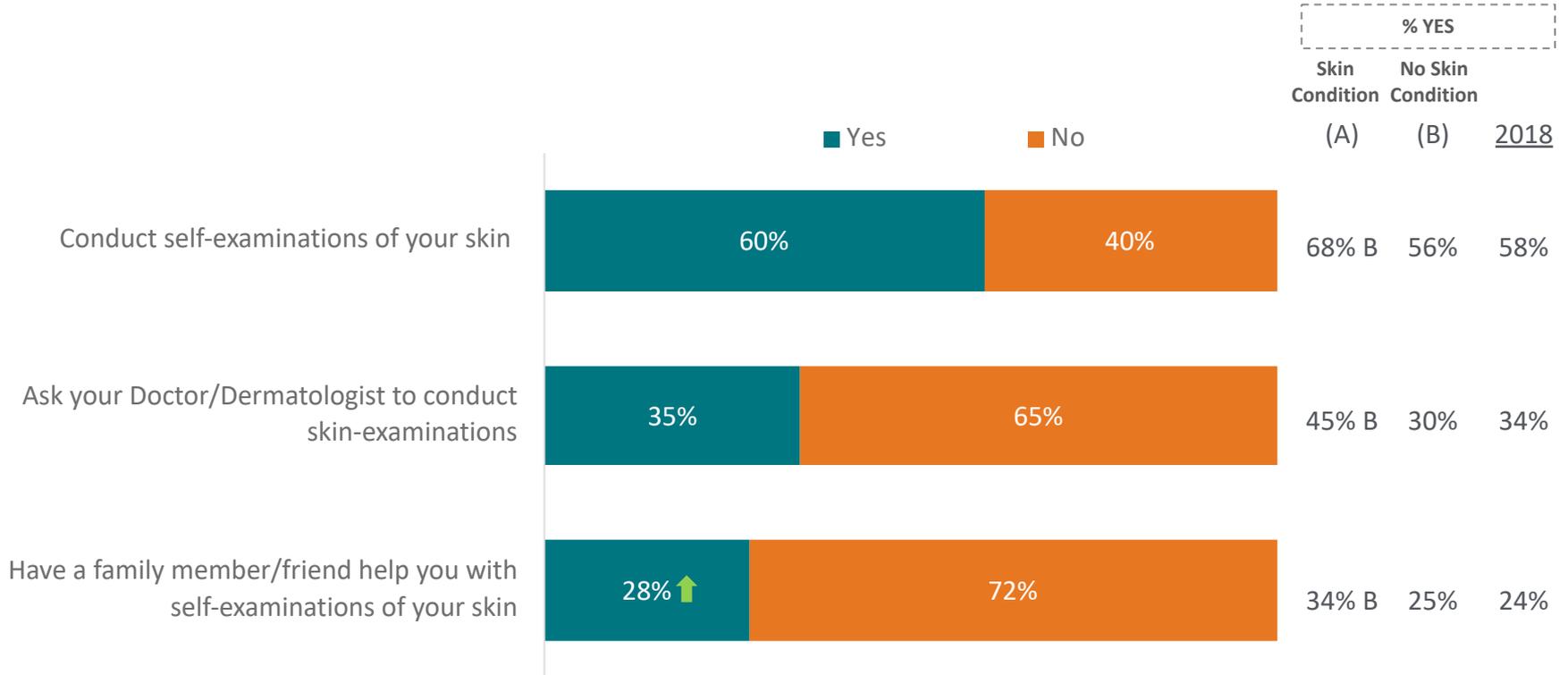
11c. Has price ever stopped you from purchasing any of the following products?

Base: All respondents Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)

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# MEDICAL EVALUATIONS

Nearly 6 in 10 Canadians conduct self examinations of their skin. Only a third ask their doctor to conduct skin-examinations while over a quarter of Canadians have a family member/friend help them, which is an increase from last year. Those with a skin condition are more likely to have skin evaluations done.



11d. Do you ever...  
 Base: All respondents Sept '18 (n=1204); Sept '19 (n=1228)  
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↑ ↓ Indicates results are significantly higher or lower compared to Sept 2018

## MEDICAL EVALUATIONS BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Those aged 18-34 and 55+ are more likely than those 35-54 to conduct self examinations. Those aged 55+ are more likely than all other age groups to ask their doctor/dermatologist to conduct skin examinations. Those aged 18-34 are more likely than those aged 35+ to have a family member help with self examination.

%Yes	Total	Gender		Age			
		Male A	Female B	16-17 C	18-34 D	35-54 E	55+ F
Conduct self-examinations of your skin	60%	58%	61%	52%	63% E	52%	65% CE
Ask you doctor/dermatologist to conduct skin examinations	35%	37%	34%	25%	31%	31%	43% CDE
Have a family member/friend help you with self-examinations of your skin	28%	29%	27%	31%	35% EF	24%	26%

Where a percentage is followed by a letter, the letter indicates that the percentage is statistically significantly higher than the percentage shown in the column associated with the letter. For example, 63% of female Canadians say they conduct self-examinations of their skin- this is significantly higher than the percentage of males (52%).