

## World Melanoma Day 2020

### The Canadian Dermatology Association urges Canadians to reduce their risks for melanoma as we spend more time outdoors in the coming weeks

**Ottawa, May 11, 2020** – As temperatures increase and Canadians living through the COVID-19 pandemic seek more opportunities to get outdoors, the Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) issues an important reminder: don't neglect sun-safe practices to protect against melanoma and other skin cancers.

Today marks World Melanoma Day, and the CDA is highlighting the facts about melanoma, including its rising incidence rates among Canadians; it is one of the few types of cancer that continues to increase every year. Today the CDA releases new public opinion research on Canadians' knowledge and behaviour about preventing skin cancer. Although the CDA's latest *Sun Safe Behaviour Survey*<sup>1</sup> contains some encouraging results, it also reveals some worrisome trends.

"Our research shows that many Canadians still have misconceptions about what they can do to reduce their risk of melanoma from exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation," says Dr. Jennifer Beecker, National Chair of the CDA Sun Awareness Working Group. "And even when they do understand the safe approach, they don't always translate that knowledge into action."

"It's natural that Canadians living with stay-at-home measures for many weeks see spring's arrival as a chance to spend more time outside. The country's certified dermatologists want to reinforce that a few simple protective steps can make that time safe and enjoyable," says Dr. Beecker.

The CDA reminds Canadians to take these steps to **Minimize Your Melanoma Risk:**

- Seek shade between 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Wear protective clothing, a wide brimmed hat, and UV-protective sunglasses.
- Wear sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 30.<sup>2</sup>
- Early detection is key, and everyone should regularly perform a skin evaluation and [see a certified dermatologist](#) if you spot something suspicious.

*Melanoma: An increasing threat*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The CDA has commissioned its *Sun Safe Behaviour Survey* every year since 2015. The questions for the most recent survey were fielded on Ipsos' Canadian online omnibus between September 6 and 12, 2019, to a representative sample of 1,228 Canadians, age 16 and older.

<sup>2</sup> The Canadian Dermatology Association supports the use of sunscreen as an effective and safe means to provide protection from the sun's harmful rays. There is strong scientific evidence of the adverse effects of UV exposure in contrast to the hypothetical negative effects of sunscreen on your health.

<sup>3</sup> 2019 and 2020 Canadian Cancer Society data.

The incidence of melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer, has steadily increased in Canada for the past several decades. While the incidence of some types of cancer is decreasing every year (e.g. laryngeal for both sexes, lung cancer in males, and cervical cancer in females), melanoma is among the types that continue to increase annually.

Since 1994, the incidence rates of melanoma went up 2.2 % per year for men and 2.0% for women.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, in 2020, an estimated 8,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer and 1,300 Canadians will die from the disease.

"Canada's certified dermatologists are committed to educating the public about sun safety, all year long," says CDA President Dr. Kerri Purdy. "That's because sun exposure is a risk factor for melanoma and other skin cancers and with knowledge, Canadians have the power to reduce their risks."

"While melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer, it is highly treatable when discovered early," adds Dr. Purdy. "We are also stressing the importance of monitoring your skin and to seek your dermatologist's advice as soon as you notice worrisome changes."

For more details see FACT SHEET: [MELANOMA BY THE NUMBERS 2020](#)

#### *2019 CDA Sun Safe Behaviour Survey*

The latest public opinion survey commissioned by the CDA Sun Awareness Working Group reveals some positive trends. Canadians increasingly understand the risks of sun exposure and the harmful effects of ultraviolet UV radiation, and on many measures, they are also changing behaviours to better protect themselves.

On the other hand, the data also shows that Canadians continue to have misconceptions about aspects of sun safety.

#### Positive Findings

- 93% agree it is essential to protect your skin from the sun
- 88% of those who use sunscreen use SPF 30 or higher
- 76% say using sunscreen is important
- 72% wear sunglasses with UV protective lenses all year when outdoors
- 70% apply sunscreen when going outdoors
- 64% are concerned about the risk of skin cancer from sun exposure – up from 59% in 2018

#### Findings of concern

- 81% find sunscreen safe to use – down from 85% in 2018.
- 78% are concerned about skin damage from sun's UV rays – down from 82% last year.

- 54% look for skincare products with SPF, down from 60% last year and the lowest level in 5 years.
- 53% try not to expose themselves to the sun between 11 am and 3 pm – down from 59% in 2018
- 41% of 16- and 17-year-olds list skin cancer as their top concern compared to 58% of Canadians 55 and older.
- 21% use sunscreen all year round – down from 26% in 2018.

For more details see [2019 SUN SAFE BEHAVIOUR SURVEY](#)

For more advice from the CDA on protecting yourself from melanoma and other skin cancers, visit [dermatology.ca](http://dermatology.ca)

#### 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.

#### MEDIA CONTACT

For further information, please contact:  
Nimmi Lawrence, Manager, Marketing and Communications  
Office: 613-738-1748 x 228  
[nlawrence@dermatology.ca](mailto:nlawrence@dermatology.ca)