

Sun Safety Starts With You!

4th Quarter

Welcome Back to Your Sun Safety Newsletter!

This newsletter is here to support you with simple tips, helpful reminders, and engaging information to help keep your child sun-safe every day, in every way. Give your child a bright start with smart sun safety habits!

Note: Students are encouraged to bring their own sunscreen from home to apply at school!

Truths about Tanning

Although tanning is a common practice during the summer months, it is **not recommended** by Health Canada.¹

“There is a 75% increased risk of developing life-threatening melanoma if you start using indoor tanning beds before age 35.”²

Tanning is a sign of has many dangerous side effects including:³

- Sunburns
- Premature aging of skin
- Skin cancer

The Case for Sunscreen

Although there have been reports of negative impact associated with certain sunscreen ingredients, the overall benefits of sun protection outweigh the controversial risks of sunscreen use.³

While studies have **suggested that nanoparticles** of titanium dioxide and zinc oxide (found in certain sunscreens)⁴ **may harm corals**, **further research** needs to elucidate this controversy.⁵

A U.S. investigation found a cancer-causing ingredient called **benzene** in 27% of 294 batches they tested in 2021.

This ingredient was likely detected due to **contamination** in the manufacturing process.⁶

Sun Safety: Myth or Fact?

Fact: Sunscreen is not “waterproof.”⁷

While certain sunscreens are **water resistant** (they stay on wet skin for 40-80 minutes), **sweat and water wash away** sunscreen.⁷ This is why it is important to **reapply** it!

Myth: Sunscreen ingredients are linked to cancer.⁸

Busted: To stay sun-safe and prevent skin cancer, the CDA recommends applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30+. In the past, specific sunscreen products were removed from shelves because of contamination during manufacturing with a cancer-causing chemical called benzene.⁸

Smart Sunnies!

Ultraviolet Protection Factor

UPF is used to measure the effectiveness of **sun protective fabrics**. You can buy clothing to block out UV radiation!⁹

Comparing Clothing Colours

Though fabric composition plays a big part, **dark colours** tend to absorb more UV rays and provide **more protection** than lighter shades.¹⁰

Sun Safety Scenarios

At the pool on a sunny day, parents assume the kids are safe from sunburn because they're in the water. Hours later, the kids have red sunburns.

How could they have prevented this?

The parents could have used water-resistant broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen, reapplying every 40 to 80 minutes, even on cloudy days. The kids could have also worn high-coverage UV-protective rash guards (tops and bottoms), and wide-brimmed hats between swims.

Trivia

Q: What does “UPF” stand for when it comes to sun-protective clothing?

A: Ultraviolet Protection Factor.

Q: What are some commonly overlooked areas when it comes to sun protection?

A: Eyelids, lips, ears, tops of the feet, and the scalp.



A Quick Questionnaire - 5 Minutes!

Click on the QR code or link to answer a few questions about your sun safety knowledge and practices!

<https://forms.gle/AMQXybkEvGkbgKN3Z>

References

1. Canada H. Government of Canada. Tanning beds and equipment - [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/tanning-beds-lamps.html#a2). June 1, 2023. Accessed August 12, 2025. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/tanning-beds-lamps.html#a2>.
2. Schulman JM, Fisher DE. Indoor ultraviolet tanning and skin cancer: Health risks and opportunities. *Current Opinion in Oncology*. 2009;21(2):144-149. doi:10.1097/cco.0b013e3283252fc5
3. Sander M, Sander M, Burbidge T, Beecker J. The efficacy and safety of sunscreen use for the prevention of skin cancer. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. 2020;192(50). doi:10.1503/cmaj.201085
4. Smijs TG, Pavel S. Titanium dioxide and zinc oxide nanoparticles in sunscreens: focus on their safety and effectiveness. *Nanotechnol Sci Appl*. 2011;4:95-112. Published 2011 Oct 13. doi:10.2147/NSA.S19419
5. Toxicological assessment of zinc oxide and titanium dioxide ... Accessed August 12, 2025. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1091&context=hcas_etd_all.
6. Sunscreens: Benzene exposure risk. Canadian Dermatology Association. November 17, 2023. Accessed August 5, 2025. <https://dermatology.ca/sunscreens-exposure-risk/>.
7. Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Sunscreen: How to help protect your skin from the sun. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Accessed September 28, 2025. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/understanding-over-counter-medicines/sunscreen-how-help-protect-your-skin-sun>.
8. Sunscreen and benzene update. Canadian Dermatology Association. October 25, 2024. Accessed July 29, 2025. <https://dermatology.ca/public-patients/sun-protection/sunscreen-and-benzene-update/>.
9. Adam J. Sun-protective clothing. *Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery*. 1998;3(1):50-53. doi:10.1177/12034754980030011
10. Berry EG, Bezecny J, Acton M, Sulmonetti TP, Anderson DM, Beckham HW, Durr RA, Chiba T, Beem J, Brash DE, et al. Slip versus Slop: A Head-to-Head Comparison of UV-Protective Clothing to Sunscreen. *Cancers*. 2022; 14(3):542. <https://doi.org/10.3390/cancers14030542>