

THE SUNSMART NEWSLETTER

SunSmart Schools and Early Childhood Centres in the ACT

For ACT SunSmart Schools and Early Childhood Centres

WINTER— What's this mean for SunSmart ?

Now winter is fast approaching, Canberra kids will be pleased to hear that they can ease off on sun protection measures over the June and July period. Whilst sun protection is recommended all year round in some States and Territories, this is not the case for Canberra and the southern states. So Canberrans can relax a little over June and July.

Kids will be replacing their bucket hats for beanies as they tackle those icy cold Canberra mornings in June and July. And because the UV levels during this period are **UNDER 3 in Canberra**, The Cancer Council ACT

(TCCA) does not recommend sun protection unless you're in an alpine region or around highly reflective surfaces such as snow or water.

The benefits of sun exposure.

There has been a lot of discussion recently about the health benefits of sun exposure versus adequate sun protection. It is also a growing area of research so further information will become available in the future. The Cancer Council recognises that a balance is required between avoiding an increase in the risk of skin cancer and getting enough sun exposure to maintain adequate vitamin D levels.

From August to the end of May most people in Canberra will get enough vitamin D going about their normal day to day activities, even when using sun protection, whilst in June and July roughly 2-3 hours a week of sun exposure to the face, arms and legs is required to produce sufficient vitamin D levels for most people.

If you are concerned about your or your child's vitamin D levels, you should seek advice from your family GP.

People need to avoid increasing their risk of skin cancer but receive enough UV radiation to maintain adequate vitamin D levels.

Does your sun protection policy address vitamin D?

"31st of May is Hats OFF Day".

Because The Cancer Council ACT does not recommend sun protection in Canberra during June and July, teachers and carers should be aware of this transformation and should not enforce the wearing of hats and sun-screen during this period. Basically, when UV levels are **3 or ABOVE (Aug-May)** skin protection IS recommended as the UV rays are intense enough to damage the skin. Enforcing sun protection for the entire 12 months of the year in Canberra is



not recommended and may actually lead to other health concerns such as vitamin D deficiency.

However, if your family plans to take a trip north during this time, or will be around snow or water then sun protection will be required as UV levels may be higher.

If you are concerned about daily UV levels and would like to learn more about the UV Index visit the Bureau of Meteorology at www.bom.gov.au or contact The Cancer Council.

But remember "**1st of August is Hats ON For All Of Us**"

Now that is being SunSmart.



25-50% Off

SALE

The Cancer Council ACT shop is clearing its summer range of kid's sun protection clothing, hats, sunglasses and swim wear. With at least 25% off and a massive 50% off selected items, so now is the time to stock up. **SALE on now until the end of July— but HURRY whilst stock lasts.**

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SunSmart Early Childhood Program

Early Childhood Centres

Over the past 6 months, 23 SunSmart Centres in Canberra have taken part in the review process. This process occurs every 2 years, which assures that ACT early childhood centres have the most comprehensive and updated sun protection policy in place.

Once The Cancer Council has received your Review Form and a copy of your centre's sun protection policy, a letter of recommendations will be sent out to your centre. It is important that centres

acknowledge these recommendations and take time to adopt them into their current policy. Whilst we understand that policies can take time to update, TCCACT urges all centres to amend their policies where appropriate and to return a copy to The Cancer Council. This way, we can confidently extend your centre's SunSmart status.

Did you know that children are far more likely to wear a hat if a parent wears one. Role modeling is a great way to promote positive sun protection behavior.

TCCACT has poster sets for sale that have been specifically designed for early childhood centres. These are a great resource for all centres.



SunSmart in the ACT

Over 60 local early childhood centres and over 50 ACT primary schools still do not have a SunSmart status. Does yours? Do you have the famous SunSmart logo on display?

To join the SunSmart program or to find out more about your centre's or school's current SunSmart status, contact TCCACT today on 6257 9999

All schools and centres are encouraged to update their sun protection policy and to return a copy of it to The Cancer Council ACT

Look who's now SunSmart– and who's not!!

The Cancer Council ACT would like to congratulate **Narrabundah Children's Cottage** and **Stepping Stones Gunghalin** for their recent efforts towards becoming a recognized SunSmart service this year. They have proven to The Cancer Council that they are committed to protecting the children and staff in their care from the harmful effects of over exposure to ultraviolet radiation. They have also demonstrated that they are cautious of the importance of vitamin D production especially in growing bones by easing off sun protection behavior during the months of June and July.

Whilst only 2 new centres

have earned a SunSmart status so far this year, the following centres have made a positive start and have been listed as **"Participating"** in the program however have **NOT** yet earned a SunSmart status.

- Alkira** Community Childcare (April07)
- Black Mountain** Community Centre (March 07)
- Campbell's Cottage** Childhood Centre (Nov 04)
- Civic Early Childhood** Centre (Dec 04)
- Cooinda Cottage** (Oct 06)
- CSIRO** Early Childhood Centre (April 05)
- Currawong** Childcare Centre (Nov 04)
- French– Australian** Preschool (Jan 07)
- Gold Creek World Of Learning** (Oct 06)
- Little Explorers** Early Childhood Centre (Oct 05)
- Nicholls** Early Childcare

- Possum Magic** Childcare Centre (Nov 04)
- Red Hill** Childcare Centre (July 06)
- St Nicholas** Greek– Aust Preschool (Jan 07)
- The Park School for Early Learning** (Oct 06)
- Totom House** (Nov 06)
- Teddy Bears** Childcare (Nov 06)
- Weston Creek** Children's Centre (Oct 06)
- Wiradjuri** (Aug 06)

TCCACT really encourages these centres to follow through with the recommendations they have received and to make the appropriated changes to their current policy. If your centre is awarded a SunSmart status **before May 31st** it will receive a **FREE** set of SunSmart posters (pictured above) that have been specifically designed to assist staff and carers with sun protection education. **SO GO FOR IT.**

National SunSmart Schools Program



Primary Schools– Review Update

Likewise over the past 6 months or so, 22 SunSmart primary schools in Canberra have also shown their commitment to the National SunSmart Schools Program by taking part in the review process. Whilst it was fantastic to review so many updated and current policies, it is important to remember to follow through with any recommendations that your school would have received from TCCA. This will make sure that your school has the most comprehensive and update policy in place.

The review process is also a great time for teachers and staff to comment on

any sun protection behaviors or issues your school may currently be experiencing.

TCCA encourages the following schools to update and, importantly return a copy of their sun protection policy to The Cancer Council sooner rather than later TCCA can then confidently extend your schools national SunSmart status.

-Fadden Primary School
-Higgins primary School
-O'Connor Cooperative School
-St John the Apostle Primary School
-St Thomas Aquinas Primary School
-Torrens Primary School
-Turner Primary School

Look who's now SunSmart

TCCA would like to congratulate **Wanniassa Primary School** and **North Ainslie Primary School** for their efforts towards becoming a nationally recognized SunSmart school. Both schools have implemented a comprehensive sun protection policy that addresses the school's environment, curriculum and behavior. **Nice Job !**

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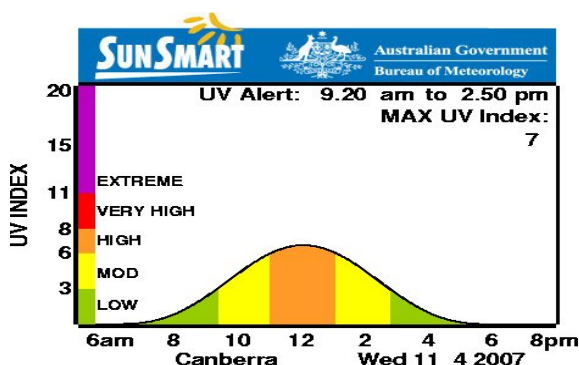
5 Richmond Ave, Fairbairn
ACT 2609.
OR
Call us on 6257 9999
OR
Email us at
reception@actcancer.org
OR
Visit us at www.actcancer.org

SunSmart Secondary Schools!!

The Cancer Council ACT has a NEW national resource that has been specifically designed to guide teenagers in making healthier sun protection choices.

If you know a secondary school that may be interested in this new resource, please encourage them to contact The Cancer Council.

The UV Index– What's it mean? Where do I find it?



The UV Index can be found every day in The Canberra Times or online at the BOM website. This is a great tool that everyone should become familiar with. It tells us at what time of the day UV will be at its peak and over what time of the day UV

will be **3 or above**. It also tells us what the max UV level for the day will be. In the example above (April 11th 2007) we can see that between 9.20 am and 2.50 pm UV levels were indeed be **3 and above** (this alerts us that sun protection is recom-

mended). It also shows clearly that from about **11am and 1pm (orange area)** UVR was at its highest, in this case **7**, which signifies **HIGH** (this reminds us all to take even extra care in the sun) As you can see, even during the middle of April when temperatures are starting to fall **UV is still HIGH**. Actually, temperature and UV levels are not related, so people should not try to gauge UV levels based on daily temperatures. Research shows that sunburn commonly occurs on cooler and overcast days because people assume sun protection is not necessary and fail to adopt sun protection measures.

The Cancer Council ACT encourages all Canberrans and especially those who work part or all of the day outside to familiarise themselves with the SunSmart UV Index.

Vitamin D dietary sources include egg yolk, oily fish such as salmon and sardines, sweet potatoes and alfalfa. However, the majority of vitamin D is produced through exposure to small amounts of the sun's UV radiation.



Policy objectives –Checklist



Your policy should include the following key points:

- Policy is implemented from the 1st August until the 31st May, with particular care taken between 10am and 2pm (11am and 3pm daylight saving time). Due to Canberra's low UV levels during June and July (under3) sun protection is not recommended during these months. This is to reduce the risk of Vitamin D deficiency in the ACT region
- Policy is reflected in the planning of all outdoor events / activities / camps
- Babies (under 12 months) should be kept out of direct sunlight. Sunscreen should only be applied where necessary to exposed skin not protected by clothing or hats.
- Broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hats are required
- Sun protective clothing is included in the dress code (be specific)
- Children without hats are encouraged to play in shaded/inside areas
- Children are encouraged to use shaded areas for outdoor activities
- A combination of the 5 sun protection measures are considered when planning outdoor experience and excursions
- The staff/ committee will ensure there is appropriate shade at the centre/school
- The application of SPF 30+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is included
- Staff and parents are encouraged to act as SunSmart role-models
- Education on sun protection is included in games, stories etc
- The SunSmart message is promoted to all staff and families
- Policy review points are included
- Sunglasses are acknowledged in the policy (meet AS 1067)