

THE SUNSMART NEWSLETTER

SunSmart Schools and Early Childhood Centres in the ACT

UV radiation- what you need to know

Since the 1st of August, ALL ACT childcare services and primary schools would once again have started to reinforce positive sun protection behaviour. If your sun protection policy still needs updating, then now is the time- don't put it off any longer.

UV levels will now be noticeably on the rise as we make our way into the summer months. I can hear some of you saying "noticeable!! how can we notice these rising UV levels"? Can we feel UV Can we see UV? What does it mean when daily forecasts state that UV levels will be Moderate? High? Very high? and Extreme? 5, 7, 9 and 13? **Crikeys...**

The fact is, ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun is tricky stuff. It's invisible, we know it can be dangerous, it cannot be felt, it never takes a day off, it reflects and scatters around the place, it burns us, damages our eyes and it gives us wrinkles! yet it helps our bodies to produce vitamin D.

What is solar UV radiation? And what do we need to know about it to keep our children, (teachers, mums and dads) safe?

• Well, there are three types of solar UVR: **UVA, UVB** and **UVC**. Lucky for us UVC does not reach the earth's sur-

face- however UVA and UVB certainly do. Both these contribute to sunburn, skin aging, wrinkles, cataracts, skin damage and ultimately skin cancer.

•UVA and UVB reaches us directly and indirectly- UVR loves to bounce around- it reflects off sand, water and snow straight back at us. So it can be difficult to completely avoid at times. Solar UVR loves to hang out with us which is why we ALL need to protect ourselves with a **combination of the 5 sun protection measures**- not just a hat! Alas **Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide**.

•UV radiation is at its strongest between the "peak UV hour period" **10am-3pm**. This is why we should take extra care during this period. When UV levels start getting particularly high (see UV Alert) you may even want to avoid being outside during these hours if you can. Remember even before and after the "peak UV hours" UV levels can still be **3 and above**- strong enough to damage YOUR skin- so sun protection may still be required.

• Because we cannot see OR feel UVR, the best way to find out exactly how much UV is outside is to view the daily **SunSmart UV ALERT**. Basically it forecasts the time of day when UV levels are **3 and above** and sun protection is recommended.

•Australia has high UV levels due to our geographical location and latitude. So the

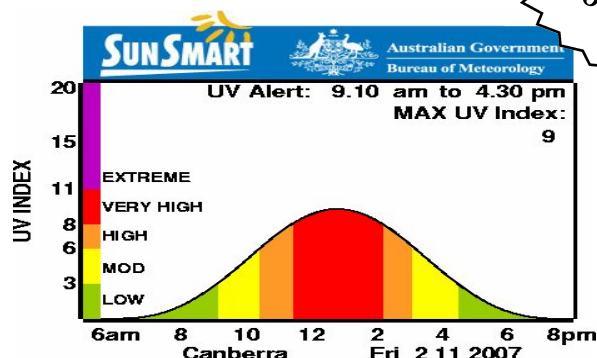
further you travel north in Australia the more cautious you should be.

• Did you know that many people get burnt on cooler and overcast days because they make the false presumption that sun protection is not needed? Don't try to gauge daily UV levels based on daily temperature. They are not really related! UV levels can still be high on cool and/or overcast days.

As you can see, there is a lot more to solar UV radiation than meets the eye. The more you, your students and your family know about UVR the better you can and will protect yourself.

So this summer keep an eye on the **UV Alert**, cover up and take it easy in the sun. Remember-the higher the UV levels- the quicker your unprotected skin will burn. Now that's not very cool!!

What's the UV level today in Canberra?



http://www.bom.gov.au/products/UV/Canberra_NSW.shtml
 OR The Canberra Times Whether Section



Contact TCCACT for your copy



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Bookmark IT!

SunSmart Early Childhood Program– update

Myth Busters
TRUE OR FALSE.
It takes at least half an hour to get burnt



Need a new SunSmart sign?

If your school or centre already has a SunSmart status but your original metal SunSmart sign has been ruined, stolen or misplaced– you may want to purchasing a new sign to brighten up your wall or fence.

The Council is happy to report that so far this year the following centres have been awarded a national SunSmart status for all their efforts and commitment to safety.

Congratulation to:

- **St Nicholas** Greek Australian Preschool.
- **Teddy Bears CC**
- **CSIRO** Black Early Child-care Mountain Centre
- **Totom House** Multicultural Early Childcare Centre
- **Chinese Australian ECC**
- **The Park School** for Early Learning
- **Nicholls ECC**
- **Alkira** Community Centre and Preschool
- **Stirling ECC**
- **Wiradjuri** Preschool and Childcare Centre
- **Calwell ECC**
- **St Philip's** Kindergarten
- **Blinky Bill ECC**
- **Lavender Lane CC**

Nice Job.....

Has your centre been awarded a SunSmart status yet? If not– then get cracking, summer is on its way so now is the time to act!!

There are an additional 16 ACT childcare centres who are currently in the process of earning a SunSmart status. TCCACT urges these centres to spend some time updating and returning their polices so they too can receive a SunSmart status. If your centre is not sure on it's current SunSmart status then contact The Council today on 6257 9999. Likewise if you require more assistance with your policy contact us.

TCCACT has educational poster sets for sale that have been specifically designed for early childhood centres. These are a great resource for all centres. Does your centre need a new teaching resources?



Confused about vitamin D!! Don't be.....

In June this year The Cancer Council in collaboration with other leading Australian health organizations released it's updated Position Statement—**Risks and Benefits of Sun Exposure.**

In summary it noted that a balance is required between avoiding an increase in the risk of developing skin cancer by excessive sun exposure and achieving enough sun exposure to maintain adequate vitamin D levels. However it also noted that the majority of Australians are thought to have sufficient amounts of UV exposure from the sunlight to provide them with adequate levels of Vitamin D simply from going about day to day outdoor activities– needing only a few minutes of sunlight a day on either side of the peak UV periods.

It was also recommended that in this part of the country, in June and July when UV levels are LOW (under 3) people should seek a few hours of sun exposure during the week– alas sun protection during this period is generally not recommended.

The new position statement outlines general recommendations for different parts of Australia. If you are concerned about maintaining adequate vitamin D levels without increasing your risk of developing skin cancer then The Cancer Council recommends you download the following 7 page Position Statement.

<http://www.cancer.org.au/File/PolicyPublications/PSRisksBenefitsSunExposure03May07.pdf>

Sunscreen Special

10% off for SunSmart schools & centres

THE CANCER COUNCIL ACT
Present this coupon and receive 10% of your sunscreen order

Tel: 6257 9999

To be used 07/08 summer

Myth Busters
FALSE.

In Australia, sunburn can occur in as little as 10- 15 minutes on a fine January day. So it is important to be SunSmart for all outdoor activities including daily activities around the backyard or garden as much as planned outings such as the beach, sailing and picnics. Daily activities in the sun contribute to lifelong cumulative effects of UVR and can increase ones' risk of developing skin cancer. Disturbingly 1 in 5 Australians were reported getting sunburnt on a typical weekend in summer. (03/04)

National SunSmart Schools Program-update

Thank you to ALL schools who returned their **Review Form** with a copy of their current sun protection policy over the year. Schools would have also then received a letter of recommendations to assist them toward updating their current sun protection policy to meet minimal national SunSmart standards. **TCCACT urges these schools to update and return a copy of their policy asap.** The review process is an important part of the National SunSmart Schools Program as it is a reminder to the whole school community to not become complacent when

it comes to skin cancer prevention and awareness at school.

The Cancer Council encourages the following schools to return their **Review Form and policy** today:

- Marist College Primary
- Fadden Primary School
- St John the Apostle.
- The Woden School.

This year **Gilmore Primary School** and **Malkara School** have both been awarded a nationally recognized SunSmart status for their commitment and efforts toward skin cancer prevention and awareness. *Nice Job!*

Does YOUR school have a SunSmart status yet?

The Council also encourages the following schools, they have already made a great start toward becoming SunSmart, so keep at it.

- Amaroo Primary School
- Arawang Primary School
- Charnwood Primary School

There is still roughly **40** primary schools across the ACT that have not yet joined **The National SunSmart Schools Program**. However a large number of these schools have shown an interest in the program over 2007 and should have received a **SunSmart Application Kit**. These schools are urged to complete and return their application forms and policy **ASAP**.

THE CRITICS' CHOICE 2007

ACT Results

14 ACT schools, 622 students and 16 teachers participated in this years' Critics Choice competition. The most favored anti-smoking video in Canberra was "Relax" followed by "Sponge" and at a distant third was "Smoking Animals".

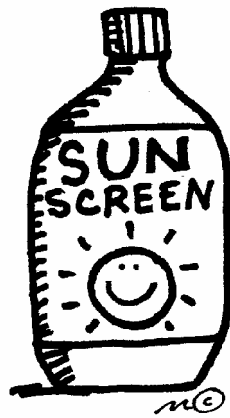
The first, second, and the third place prizes were awarded to students from **Holy Spirit, Charles Conder** and **St Claire of Assisi** respectively; whilst coincidentally all were from grade 6. The winning teacher was also from Charles Conder primary School.

The Cancer Council would like to thank ALL schools and students who participated in this national competition.

For more information about critics Choice contact TCCACT.

Sunscreen- get the most out of it!

SunSmart centres and schools depend on sunscreen for most months of the year to protect their children, students and staff from the sun. With summer just around the corner, effective sun protection will be even more important. So here is a general run down on sunscreen.



WHAT IS IT?

Sunscreen creates a chemical barrier that absorbs and/or reflects UV rays away from the skin. No sunscreen will ever provide 100% protection so it is important to use in **combination with the other sun protection measures** including wearing practical clothing and a hat, avoiding those peak UV hours especially when the UV levels are at their strongest, wearing sunnies and of course always seeking shade where available.

APPLYING IT:

Sunscreen should always be applied roughly 20 minutes before going outside- this will allow it time to bind to the skin. If centres find it difficult to apply 20 minutes beforehand- do make an effort to at least apply it sometime before outdoor activities commence.

Many early childcare centres require parents to apply sunscreen on their children when being dropped off- this ensures all children have some protection for

the morning play periods- but make sure it is reapplied for any afternoon outings.

Different schools and centres will have different methods of applying sunscreen- whether roll-on or cotton pads - make sure you use enough and only apply lightly- do not rub it all in.

Reapply every **2 hours** or after swimming or sweaty exercises/activities.

HOW MUCH?

Firstly, follow the instructions. However a good rule of thumb for kids is about half a teaspoon per limb and half for the face, neck and ears. The trick is to make sure there is a film of sunscreen covering exposed skin.

WHAT TYPE?

SPF 30+ broad spectrum and water resistant.

BUT REMEMBER:

Sunscreen should always be seen as the final line of defense and should never be used to extend time in the sun. It should always be used in combination with the other sun protection measures

Always check the use by date and for better protection store in a cooler place (under 25 C) and not in the sun.

Sunscreen Fundraiser

Are you a SunSmart centre or school? Do you need help raising money for your service or school? Would you like to take part in a fundraiser this summer?

The Cancer Council can supply SunSmart centres and schools with cost price sunscreen which you can resell at a profit to raise money. Why not promote sun safety whilst raising money for your school/service this summer.

60 Minutes - Sunburnt Country

A NEW DVD resource for ACT Secondary Schools and Colleges.

November 18th–24th is **National Skin Cancer Action Week**– This year The Cancer Council ACT has encouraged all ACT secondary schools and colleges to take part in the week by actively promoting the real dangers associated with too much sun.

Teenagers continue to be a more difficult target group when it comes to promoting positive sun protection behavior–so it is important that secondary schools play an active role in promoting such an important public health message.

In young people aged 12-24 years, melanoma is the most commonly diagnosed cancer, with more than double the number of cases of any other kind of cancer. Whilst some of you may or may not have teenagers, *yet*. It is important that we continue to encourage and actively promote the benefits of healthy sun protection habits beyond the primary school years.

Beside the obvious link between sun exposure and skin cancer, over exposure to UVR also creates premature aging, wrinkles and eye damage.

Whilst a large number of teenagers are aware of the dangers associated with tanning and sunburn– a recent survey reported that more than three quarters of the ACT students surveyed reported getting sunburnt at least once the previous summer!

The Cancer Council has developed a new national DVD resource kit- **60 Minutes Sunburnt Country**. It has recently been distributed FREE of charge amongst all ACT secondary schools and colleges.

The DVD and Teacher Notes examine the many issues related to young people and skin cancer

Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the DVD this summer– starting in National Skin Cancer Awareness Week in November.

If you have a child in secondary school–TCCACT hopes their school will actively participate in skin cancer awareness and prevention this summer.

For more information contact The Cancer Council ACT on 6257 9999.

Read all about it.....

Has your centre or school been awarded a SunSmart status recently? If so why not promote your achievement with a local media release? We can supply your service with a sample media release, simply complete it and post to your local paper or community newsletter.



HAVE YOUR SAY!

If you have any SunSmart news, ideas, issues or something you want to share with other centres or schools then we really want to hear from YOU. Contact The Cancer Council ACT on 6257 9999 or email myself at david.wild@actcancer.org



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