

# Sun Safety

## Block the Sun, Not the Fun!

### Protect your children and yourself from the sun

Practicing sun safety during childhood is very important. Most people spend more time in the sun before they turn 18 than any other time during their life. Many new researches suggests that severe sunburns in childhood set the stage for later development of melanoma (skin cancer). Childhood sun exposure may be the initiating event that plants the seeds of a cancer, but scientists also discovered that repeated sun exposure in adult life may be what promotes the full-scale growth of cancer. Keep in mind that damage can happen in minutes, not hours. UV Rays can burn your skin and you won't even know, because sometimes you will not even turn red.

Tips:

- Watch the clock and try to limit the amount of time you and your children are in direct sun between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the UV Rays are the strongest and most directly overhead.
- **Generously apply a water-resistant sunscreen** on your children (and yourself) with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 that provides broad-spectrum protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays to all exposed skin.
- Apply sunblock 15 to 30 minutes before your children and you go to school or go out. Reapply after prolonged swimming, vigorous activity, sweating or toweling off. Remember to put sunblock on: ears, nose, back of the neck and legs and tops of feet.
- Your child should wear a sun hat with a wide brim and back flap, sunglasses with 100% UV protection (wraparound glasses are best) and loose cotton clothing to protect skin from the sun's rays.
- If you and your child have fair skin, light coloured eyes and hair, freckles, or spend a lot of time outside, use sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher.
- Remember to check the expiration date on the sunscreen before use. Expired sunscreens don't have enough power to provide full protection.
- **Always choose a waterproof or water-resistant sunscreen.** A waterproof **sunscreen** will keep your child protected even as they perspire.

- Encourage children to drink plenty of fluids, especially water. You should drink plenty of fluids yourself.
- Be alert for signs that a child is experiencing heat illness and needs to go inside. These include thirst, fatigue, leg or stomach cramps, and cool, moist skin, which can be a sign of heat exhaustion.
- Block the sun year round, because it is possible to burn all year (even on cloudy days and during winter). **Use extra caution near water, snow and sand** as they reflect the damaging rays of the sun, which can increase chance of sunburn.
- Most importantly, lead by example and remember to protect yourself from the sun as well.

**NOTE:** Sun block cream is not recommended for babies under 6 months old as they can rub it into their eyes or put it in their mouths. Always protect babies from the sun and seek shade at peak sun hours.