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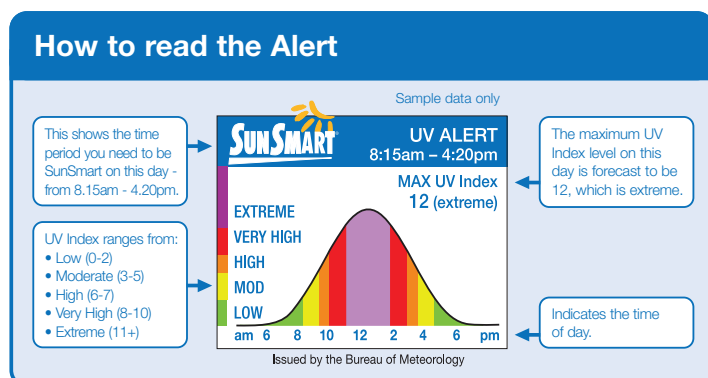
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Introduction

Welcome to the October 2007 issue of the LiveSmart secondary schools newsletter.

Since September, UV radiation has been rising significantly and The Cancer Council South Australia is urging schools to ensure students are safe from the damaging effects of the sun.

The "SunSmart UV Alert" issued by the Bureau of Meteorology and published daily on the Advertiser weather page is a tool you can use to find out when protection from the sun is needed. It is a rating system which indicates the amount of UV radiation from the sun that reaches the earth's surface. The higher the index value the greater the potential for damage to the skin.



When the UV index is forecast to reach 3 or more protection from the sun is needed, as UV radiation at this level can damage your skin and lead to skin cancer. In South Australia the UV levels are generally 3 and above every day from September to the end of April. There are also some days in May and August where the UV level can reach 3 or more, so it is also important to monitor the UV levels during these months.

If you want to view UV radiation levels in real time for Adelaide see www.arpana.gov.au/uvindex/realtime/adl_rt.htm or real time nationally see www.arpana.gov.au/uvindex/realtime/aus_rt.htm. For further information on UV radiation levels at specific sites around South Australia see www.bom.gov.au/products/IDY05214.shtml.

These websites may also be of interest to your students and could provide an interesting resource for a lesson.

Many of you would have heard the sad news about the death of Clare Oliver at 26 years of age due to melanoma. Before her death, she campaigned from her sickbed against tanning salons which she believed contributed to her cancer. She helped to drive calls for regulation of the solarium industry. One outcome of her campaign included the Health Minister Tony Abbott asking state and territory governments to consider uniform national rules for tanning salon operators. In this issue I have included an article about solariums for your information.

A big thanks to the seventy-six schools who returned the secondary schools questionnaire about their sun protection policies/practices. We are now in the process of collating the results and will base future strategies on this information. In addition, case stories of exemplar schools will be written up to showcase sun protection strategies that have been successful.

All the best for the festive season and have a great holiday!

Regards,

Betty Lipparelli, Project Officer – Young People's Programs

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Update

Solariums

What is a solarium?

A solarium is an artificial tanning machine that uses high levels of UV radiation to induce a tan on the skin. The use of solariums has been clearly linked to the development of skin cancer, melanoma being the most dangerous type.

Is it a safe way to tan?

No. Solariums emit much higher concentrations of UV radiation than the sun – often being five times as strong as the midday summer sun. All exposure to UV radiation can damage the skin and increase the risk of developing skin cancer.

Are there regulations for operators of solariums?

Recently there have been calls for uniform operating standards for solariums nationally. Currently the solarium industry in Australia is not regulated but operates under a voluntary code of practice developed by Standards Australia. There is no regulated training for solarium operators and no legal requirement for their equipment to be regularly checked or serviced.

Some of the key points in the Standard include:

- no person under the age of 15 shall be allowed to use a solarium or sun bed
- consumers aged between 15 and 18 require parental consent
- people with fair skin which burns and is unable to tan shall not use a solarium
- claims of health benefits cannot be made in the advertising or promotion of solariums
- unsupervised, automatic solariums do not comply with the Australian Standard
- warning notices must be displayed to ensure consumers are adequately informed of the risks associated with solarium use
- clients must sign a consent form.

Further information about the Standard can be found at www.standards.com.au, see AS/NZS 2635:2002.

For more information see

The Cancer Council Australia: <http://www.cancer.org.au/File/PolicyPublications/PS dangersofsolariumsAUG07.pdf>

Australian College of Dermatology: www.dermcoll.asn.au

Results of the latest survey about sun protection practices among South Australian secondary school students

During 2005, a survey of over 3,000 young South Australians in years 7 to 12, from seventy-one schools across the state reported on sun protection behaviours and attitudes. The Cancer Council South Australia would like to sincerely thank all participating schools.

The findings confirm that:

- School sun protection policies need to be promoted.
- Sun protection remains firmly in the curriculum.

Snapshot of some of the results

- There has been a general decline in adolescent sun protective behaviours since 1999.
- Specifically, there has been a 16% drop in sunscreen use in young people since 1999 and a 7% drop in hat wearing.
- Seventy seven per cent of students reported that they had been sunburnt in the past summer and 71% said they like to get a tan.
- Females and older students tended to show a lower level of sun protection than males and younger students.
- There was an increase in student skin cancer knowledge since 2002 and a decrease in lesson time devoted to sun protection.

To read the executive summary or the complete report see the following website:

www.cancersa.org.au/asp/Evaluation_studies.aspx

UV radiation and Vitamin D — a special note about children with very dark skin

While all skin types can be damaged by too much UV radiation, naturally very dark or black skinned people are relatively protected from skin cancer by the large amount of melanin (skin pigment) in their skin. People with this skin type often come from countries around central and northern Africa.

There is very little research available to determine exactly how much sun exposure is necessary to maintain adequate vitamin D levels. Variations in age, skin colour, latitude, time of day and time of year makes it impractical to provide prescriptive advice to the population as a whole or to dark skinned people in particular.

Research suggests that if people have naturally very dark skin, they require more ultraviolet radiation exposure to produce adequate levels of vitamin D as the pigment in their skin reduces ultraviolet radiation absorption. This group should be able to safely increase their sun exposure in moderation without necessarily increasing their skin cancer risk. A broad brimmed hat is recommended to protect the eyes and other sensitive areas on their face.

Further scientific investigation on the amount of ultraviolet radiation exposure required to ensure adequate vitamin D levels for people of different skin types in Australia is needed.

If young people, or their parents, are concerned about vitamin D status they are encouraged to speak to their doctor.

Cross curriculum activity – The facts about skin cancer True or false?

Ideal as an end of year activity

Enlarge this table and cut up into squares. Ask students in groups to classify each of the statements as true or false.

Answers: see page 44-46 of the updated Be SunSmart book which should be in your school. If this resource isn't available – then email me on blipparelli@cancersa.org.au and I'll send you the answers.

1. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun causes skin and eye damage	2. UV radiation is at its strongest in January	3. UV radiation cannot be felt	4. It is healthy to get a tan because it will prevent sunburn and skin cancer	5. The major cause of skin cancer is exposure to UV radiation from the sun over many years	6. Some skin types have an immunity to skin cancer, such as people with olive or tanned skin	7. UV radiation is present in the sun's rays throughout the year
8. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world	9. Getting sunburnt occasionally doesn't harm your skin	10. In Australia approximately 380,000 people will be diagnosed with skin cancer each year	11. Skin cancer can be cured if detected early	12. The colour or darkness of the lens in sunglasses gives no indication of its ultra violet (UV) radiation absorbing characteristics	13. A fake tan will provide a person with protection against UV radiation	14. So long as you keep re-applying a good SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen you will be protected from the sun all
15. It is important to reduce exposure to the sun between 10 am and 3 pm	16. The wind can cause sunburn (i.e. windburn)	17. UV radiation is still present on cloudy days	18. Sunburn can increase the risk of melanoma later in life	19. Over-exposure to the sun as a child and teenager is an important factor in the development of skin cancer later in life	20. A tanning lamp (solarium) will give you a tan without damaging your skin	21. UV radiation can reflect off sand, snow, water and other light-coloured surfaces such as concrete

Newsletter snippet

The Cancer Council Australia's SunSmart program recommends that South Australians take five steps to protect against skin damage when the SunSmart UV alert reaches 3 or above:

1. Slip on some sun-protective clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible.
2. Slop on SPF 30+ sunscreen – make sure it is broad spectrum and water resistant. Put it on 20 minutes before you go outdoors and every two hours afterwards. Sunscreen should never be used to extend the time you spend in the sun.
3. Slap on a hat – that protects your face, head, neck and ears.
4. Seek shade.
5. Slide on some sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian standards.

Looking to *Be SunSmart* – a teaching resource for years 6-10

Read the following case stories to find out how teachers are using the new updated *Be SunSmart* resource.

St Martin's College

Sarah Kahl and other health teachers from St Martins College in Mt Gambier have used the updated *Be SunSmart* book for all students in Years 7 to 10.

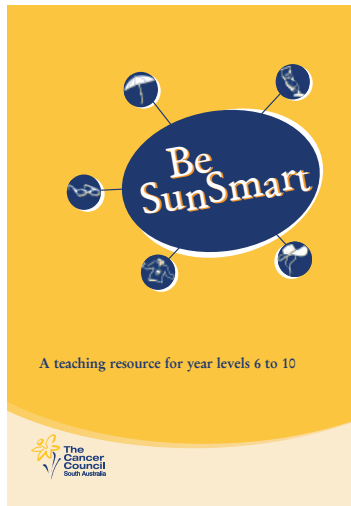
As a part of the Health curriculum students completed a unit on Sun Safety. The units run for 3 – 4 weeks with all students having two Health lessons a week. Each of the four year levels explored a different unit in the book.

- Unit 1: What do you know about skin cancer?
- Unit 2: Being SunSmart
- Unit 3: Being SunSmart in the workplace
- Unit 4: Promoting sun safety in your school

Sarah acknowledges that sun safety is a huge issue in Australia so wanted to give her students as much information as possible. She found that the *Be SunSmart* book was organised in a logical manner and contained lots of great information and activities.

One of the highlights included the Year 9 students looking at sun safety promotion in their own school. This involved them observing sun safety behaviour of students during PE lessons and recess and lunch breaks. The year 7's also discovered that the school's broad brimmed hats didn't quite meet The Cancer Council recommendations.

Sarah found the information at the start of the *Be SunSmart* book about links to the SACS Framework was very extensive and useful. Students were able to analyse and interpret current data, identify relevant health issues, explore the role of the media and Australian culture, and investigate laws and regulations in Australia.



Sarah says it is important to make the information relevant which consequently makes the unit much more meaningful. Visual images of the different skin cancers seemed to have an impact and using the DVDs that are available from The Cancer Council was also useful.

"It seems the message about Sun Safety is starting to have a positive effect but we need to make sure these behaviours continue and become second nature to the students. There are heaps of resources available out there so make use of them... there's no point re-inventing the wheel!"

Whyalla High School

Allan Greenbank, English Coordinator and Assistant Principal at Whyalla High School has used the updated *Be SunSmart* book with Year 8 students. The units were trialed in English lessons and the decision was then made to incorporate the resource activities into the Year 8 English curriculum to be taught each year.

Allan and other English teachers have used many of the activities in the resource including the game cards and quizzes. The students particularly enjoyed the team challenges and the quiz competition. They were able to critically interpret the written text for a specific purpose and were also engaged in discussions about particular topics.

Allan says "the resource is one of the most professionally written packages he has seen in 20 years of teaching. The writers have kept in mind various teaching and learning styles, the content is motivating and the lessons prepared with the students' level of interest in mind. All units are linked to a wide variety of SACS outcomes across the curriculum. As the activities are prepared for classroom use, this means that teachers have less work to do in delivering a difficult and important content"

While using the resource students became involved in the activities and expressed shock, disbelief and amazement at the information they were given. Furthermore, they were able to verbalise how this made them feel and there were comments to the effect that they'd better pay more attention to warnings and the use of protection such as sunscreen and hats.

"Grab this resource and go! This is a topic that affects all Australian kids and it is a difficult one to make headway in with high school students. This resource will change that."

If you would like a copy of *Be SunSmart* please contact The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20.

Nutrition: Teen health at risk

A quarter of Australian teenagers eat fast food everyday and more than a third hardly ever eat fruit, a Deakin University study has found. Researchers with Deakin's Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research surveyed more than 3800 secondary school students aged 12–15 years to evaluate their food intake patterns. They found that the diets of a significant number of adolescents fell short of the recommendations outlined in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

"Teenagers need to be eating a variety of foods from the five food groups—breads/cereals, lean meat and meat substitutes, vegetables, fruit and dairy every day," Professor David Crawford said.



"Our study found that most teenagers are far from having diets that will provide their growing bodies with the nutrients they need to ensure their long term health and wellbeing."

Extra foods such as fast foods, energy-dense snacks and sugar-sweetened drinks were consumed by nearly 90 per cent of the teenagers on a daily basis. Professor Crawford said that this finding was of particular concern.

"The daily inclusion of fast foods coupled with the omission of a variety of healthy foods is setting many teenagers up for serious health problems such as obesity and the psychosocial and other health-related consequences associated with this condition such as diabetes," he said.

The study found that only one third of teenagers ate at least one food from each of the five food groups everyday and just over half ate from each food group 'most days'. From the five food groups, bread and cereals were the most commonly consumed food group. These were followed by vegetables, dairy foods, meat/eggs/nuts/legumes with fruit the least consumed.

Teenagers in regional areas tended to eat more vegetables and less fast foods than their metropolitan counterparts. Girls' diets included more fruit and less fast food and sweetened drinks than boys, with boys consuming more meat and meat alternatives.

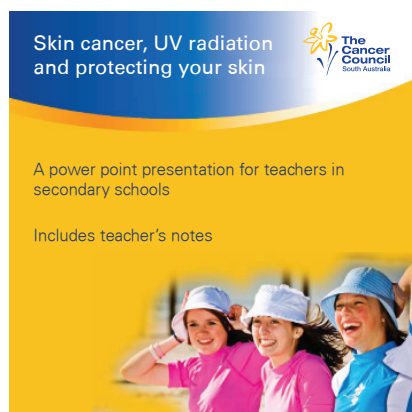
On the positive side, 87 per cent of the adolescents drank water (including low energy dense drinks) every day.

Professor Crawford said that the results of the study highlighted the need for more public health initiatives targeted at adolescents.

Thank you to the researchers at Deakin University's Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research for providing this information.

Resources

New free resource for secondary schools - a power point presentation about Skin cancer, UV radiation and protecting your skin



This new power point presentation for teachers in secondary schools will be available on 18 November to coincide with this year's National Skin Cancer Action Week.

The CD has been produced for secondary teachers to use with students to help increase understanding of skin cancer, UV radiation and encourage SunSmart behaviour.

It includes teacher's notes for easy referencing.

The power point presentation is divided into four sections which can be used over one or more lessons:

- 1 The skin and skin cancer
- 2 The sun and UV radiation
- 3 Skin cancer prevention
- 4 True or false?

The resource is particularly suited to teaching programs in Health, PE and Science, but could also be used for home group or pastoral care programs.

If you would like a free copy please contact The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20 or contact Betty Lipparelli (t 8291 4144 or e blipparelli@cancersa.org.au).

Generation SunSmart

In an exciting innovation The Cancer Council Western Australia has launched a website especially for teachers. The website offers school teachers and school health nurses online information sessions on skin protection education and content delivery.

Log on and complete interactive 20-minute modules including:

- Module 1: Skin Cancer
- Module 2: Being SunSmart
- Module 3: Sun Protection in Schools

Further reading on specific topics is also available within each module.

www.GenerationSunSmart.org.au

For more information contact The Cancer Council Western Australia by emailing education@cancerwa.asn.au.

Cancer through history timeline

The following weblink has been recently updated and provides an interesting insight into the understanding and treatments of cancer since prehistoric times.

www.cancersa.org.au/asp/Cancer_through_history_timeline.aspx

The Speakers Bureau

Would you like a speaker to come to your school to talk to staff, governing council or parent groups about skin cancer and skin protection or nutrition? An educator from The Cancer Council's Speakers Bureau is available to give talks. To organise your presentation, contact the Speakers Bureau Coordinator on 8291 4111 or download a request form from our website www.cancersa.org.au.

