

March 2005



Congratulations to
Modbury CPC - Year 7
- the 200th SunSmart School
More information on page 2.

Welcome to the first edition of the Primary Schools News Bulletin for 2005.

This summer has been much cooler than normal though the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) levels have still remained in the very high to extreme category. It is important to remember that skin damage can still occur during cooler weather and many people do get burnt during cooler temperatures, as they tend to stay out in the direct sun for longer.

This has implications for the scheduling of school outdoor activities such as sport - though the temperature may be cooler it is still important for students and staff to take particular care in the sun especially around the middle of the day from September to April.

If you have any questions about skin protection or would like to become a SunSmart School please contact me on 8291 4149 or email cmcnamara@cancersa.org.au

Carmel McNamara

Primary Schools Project Officer

Skin protection policy - things to check for when updating your policy

A skin protection policy should be reviewed at least every two years, not only to ensure that it is relevant to the school community but so that the information it contains remains accurate and current. It is important to keep up to date with existing knowledge as information might change as new research comes to light. Sometimes when a policy is reviewed there are a few things that get over looked. Please check to see if some of the following points are included in your current policy and make the necessary changes if needed:

- If you have a Rationale at the beginning of your policy, it should include: *Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with skin cancers accounting for around 80% of all new cancers diagnosed each year in Australia.* It could also include *At least 1 in every 2 Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.*
- A comprehensive skin protection policy should be in place from 1 September until 30 April.

- *No Hat No Play* could read *No Hat Play in the Shade* - The Cancer Council South Australia strongly advocates for regular physical activity, conducted safely if outdoors.
- Appropriate hat styles - a broad brimmed hat, a legionnaire style hat or a bucket hat with a deep crown and a brim width of 6cms for school aged children.
- The sunscreen listed should be SPF 30+ (and not 15+) broad spectrum and water resistant.
- Sunscreen should be applied 15 - 20 minutes before going outside and then re-applied regularly (around every 2 hrs) if outside for an extended period of time. This needs to be included in your policy.
- Note that the Anti-Cancer Foundation has changed its name to The Cancer Council South Australia - an updated policy needs to reflect this.

Is your school a SunSmart School?

If your school is doing a great job in providing a sun safe environment for your students and staff, why not become a SunSmart School. It is a very straight forward process, involving answering a questionnaire and returning it with a copy of your skin protection policy. Your application will then be assessed to ensure that it is in line with the national standard criteria.

If you need any assistance in developing a skin protection policy or updating your current one, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Once a school has gained SunSmart status they receive a large aluminium SunSmart Schools sign to display in a prominent spot. This lets the wider school community know that their school is committed to providing a sun safe environment for its students and staff.



Carmel McNamara (The Cancer Council Primary Schools Project Officer) and some Stirling East PS students with their new SunSmart School sign

Congratulations to Modbury R - 7 School The 200th SunSmart School!

Modbury Preschool -7 Primary School became a SunSmart School in August 2004 and in doing so became the 200th metropolitan school to gain SunSmart School status.

The school were awarded their SunSmart sign by Sid Seagull and a representative from The Cancer Council. Channel 10 personality Jane Reilly also attended, arriving at the school by helicopter. As she congratulated the school on their terrific achievement, Jane also shared her personal experiences about the damaging effects of sunburn.

The principal, Lina Scalfino said that they have worked hard as a school community to implement a comprehensive skin protection policy to achieve SunSmart School status.

Their SunSmart policy includes students and staff routinely wearing broad brimmed or legionnaire style hats when outdoors, their school uniform has shirts with collars and longer style shorts/skirts, students are encouraged to come to school wearing sunscreen and time is allowed for its re-application.

Skin protection is included across all year levels of the curriculum and plenty of shade is needed in the schoolyard and around the oval. School assemblies are held indoors. Outdoor activities such as PE classes, sports days and outdoor school excursions are rescheduled to be held outside peak UV times, whenever possible.

Congratulations to the following schools for gaining SunSmart Schools status:

Loxton Primary School - Loxton, **Kirton Point Primary School** - Port Lincoln, **Prescott Primary School** - Morphett Vale, **St Joseph's School** - Peterborough, **Maitland Area School** - Maitland, **Stansbury Primary School** - Stansbury, **St Francis School** - Lockleys, **St Anthony's School** - Edwardstown, **Harvest Christian School** - Kadina, **St Martin de Porres School** - Sheidow Park, **Modbury School CPC-7** - Modbury North, **St Ignatius College, Junior School** - Norwood, **Wallaroo Mines Primary School** - Kadina, **Berri Primary School** - Berri, **Robe Primary School** - Robe, **Scotch College, Junior School** - Mitcham, **Stirling East Primary School** - Stirling.

Sunscreen

I have often been asked to provide information for school newsletters. Here is some information about sunscreens to include in newsletters or parent information.

Key points about sunscreens

- Sunscreen does not offer complete protection against the sun. Hats, clothing and shade should also be used.
- A thick coating of zinc cream does block out the UV totally. It works by reflecting the rays. As it is thick and completely coats the skin it is only appropriate for small areas such as noses, ears and lips.
- All brands of Broad Spectrum sunscreen with a SPF 30+ which comply with the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2604 provide effective protection when applied correctly.
- Using a SPF 30+ rather than a SPF 15 sunscreen halves your risk of sunburn for the same length of time in the sun. SPF 30+, however, should not be used to increase the amount of time you spend in the sun.
- Sunscreen should be applied to clean, dry skin 20 minutes before exposure to the sun. It should be applied liberally - eg about one teaspoonful of cream for one arm.
- Sunscreens can be applied as a moisturiser under make-up.
- Babies under one year old should not be exposed to the direct sun. When taking babies outdoors avoid doing so between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm if possible. Natural protection, that is hats, clothing and shade, is best. However small amounts of sunscreen can be applied to areas that cannot be protected with clothing.

Look for a sunscreen labelled:

- **SPF 30+**
- **Broad Spectrum**

A water-resistant sunscreen is recommended when activity is likely to result in heavy sweating or for water-sports.

Remember - Sunscreen does not offer complete protection against UV radiation. Even if a sunscreen is reapplied regularly, a small amount of UV still reaches the skin. It is still possible for the skin to be sun damaged even with sunscreen protection if exposed to the sun repeatedly for prolonged periods.

For further information about sunscreen go to <www.cancersa.org.au>.

Parent's Jury - a parent network website

The Parents Jury is a web-based network of parents that offers a forum for parents to voice their views on children's food and physical activity issues and to collectively advocate for the improvement of children's food and physical activity environments (eg, reduced marketing targeted at young children, more healthy choices for school canteens and making neighbourhoods safer and more child-friendly).

The Parents Jury is an initiative of Diabetes Australia - Vic, The Cancer Council Victoria and the Australasian Society for the Study of Obesity, who have provided initial and ongoing financial, administrative and technical support to establish The Parents Jury. It was launched on-line in August 2004 and receives no sponsorship from the food industry, the weight loss industry or the exercise/fitness industry.

For further information have a look at the Parent's Jury website at <http://203.202.189.13/tpj_index.asp> or email <enquiries@parentsjury.org.au>.

DECS Healthy Eating Guidelines Workshops -

To support the implementation of the *eat well sa* Healthy Eating Guidelines, DECS will be holding free workshops across the state during March and April. The aim of these workshops will be:

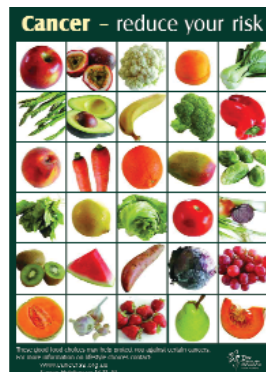
- To provide an overview of the Guidelines for schools and preschools.
- To discuss the implementation of the Guidelines with schools and preschools.
- To provide information about the Commonwealth government's \$1500 grants to support health eating in schools.

Who should attend: **Schools and preschools:** Key staff leading the sites Healthy Eating Policy Committee.

Health services: key staff who work with schools and preschools, dietitians and nutritionists. All teachers will receive a half-day professional development certificate for their attendance at the information seminar.

For further information visit <www.decs.sa.gov.au/speced/pages/default/eatwellsa>.

Enquiries to Karen Dewis (DECS), (08) 8226 1773 <dewis.karen@saugov.sa.gov.au> or Patricia Carter, (08) 8226 6504 <patricia.carter@health.sa.gov.au>.



Hospital admissions for sunburn in children triple in a decade - a concerning trend.

The number of children under the age of 12 admitted to South Australian public hospitals suffering from sunburn has more than tripled over the last ten years, according to Department of Health figures.

High UV radiation levels over summer mean that unprotected skin can be burnt in as little as 15 minutes. As children's skin is much more sensitive and delicate than that of adults, irreparable damage can occur within a very short time.

Department of Health records show that the number of children aged 0-12 years admitted to public hospitals with sunburn in the past 10 years has risen from four in the summer of 1993/94 to 14 last summer (2003/04).

The number of children treated for sunburn in the Paediatric Emergency Department at the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) has more than doubled in the last four years. Thirteen children were treated for sunburn during the summer of 2000/01 compared to 27 children last summer (2003/04).

While sunburn is an extreme form of UV radiation damage, even tanning without burning can cause skin cell damage that can lead to premature ageing and potentially, skin cancer.

The Cancer Council strongly encourages that all children are well protected with clothing, hats and SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen when outdoors, particularly between 10am and 3pm. Sunscreen should be applied to areas of the skin not covered by clothing - but shouldn't be relied on as the only form of protection. The use of shade when outdoors is also recommended. Teachers, parents and carers have an important part to play by leading by example and role modelling positive skin protection behaviours.

For cancer information and support contact the **Cancer Helpline on 13 11 20.**

The Cancer Council South Australia
(ABN 29 053 873 822)

202 Greenhill Rd, Eastwood, PO Box 929, Unley 5061
Ph (08) 8291 4111, Fax (08) 8291 4122

Email chl@cancersa.org.au

Web www.cancersa.org.au

Resources

These are available from The Cancer Council. Contact the **Cancer Helpline 13 11 20** or visit the website <www.cancersa.org.au>. To borrow videos contact the Resource Centre on (08) 8291 4165.

New resource

Safina and the Hat Tree is a real life journey of a pre-school teacher who has been diagnosed with cancer. She engages the children honestly and sensitively as she confronts this illness with the help of her family, dog Reuben and her sense of humour.



Is someone within your school community dealing with cancer? Talking about cancer with children is one of the most difficult issues for parents or teachers to address. This book is a very useful tool to begin talking about cancer to young children and is available for purchase from the Resource Centre on (08) 8291 4165 for \$15.00 including postage and GST.

Skin cancer information sheets - two information sheets on skin cancer and melanoma. Teacher use.

Sun related information sheets - nine information sheets on a range of topics from UV radiation to sunscreen. Teacher use.

Slip! Slop! Slap! poster, postcards, booklabels - featuring a SunSmart message. R-7.

Be SunSmart with Sid - a fun pamphlet with SunSmart information and games. R-4.

Cover up your kids - an information pamphlet for parents.

Playing it safe in the sun with Sid Seagull poster and teacher resource book - full of teaching activities, worksheets and stories. Teacher use. R-2.

SunSmart fun for everyone - full of teaching activities and stories for use in the classroom. Teacher use. R-7.

SunSmart schools information pack - includes a comprehensive policy guidelines booklet, application form and a brochure on how to become an accredited school.

New Sid Seagull posters - two great new Sid Seagull posters. For classroom use, R-7.

Sun days, fun days (video) - follow Rosie, Matt and their friends over a week as they have fun outdoors. They show that protecting themselves from the sun is easy, cool and something we all should do everyday. (Cost \$40 or can be hired.)