

UV protection must start early, researchers say

By Simon Pitman

2/14/2006 - **Reinforcing the importance of using sunscreen and other products that filter dangerous UV rays at an early age, US researchers have stressed the importance of protecting skin from sun before the age of 18 as crucial in the fight against skin cancer.**

Currently it is estimated that individuals receive 50 per cent of their total lifetime exposure to sun before the age of 18, but an estimated one per cent of pediatricians providing skin cancer counseling in the US, indications are that there is still much work to do.

A team of researchers at the Department of Dermatology at Wake Forest University say that its latest research suggests the message that [UV](#) protection has to start young should continue to be driven home as it is not always getting across.

"We recommend that pediatricians counsel [children](#) and their parents about UV protection," states Dr. Mandeep Kaur, an Instructor at Wake Forest.

The researchers stress the importance of changing this attitude through education of parents and children, and how both good quality [sunscreen](#) products, as well as protective clothing can help to make sun exposure less harmful.

What concerns the researchers is the fact that younger children spend significantly more time outdoors than adults, often being exposed to varying degrees of UV rays without using sunscreen.

Further to this the research team also says that there is strong evidence to back up the relationship between indoor tanning and melanoma, as well as a relationship between UV exposure and non-melanoma skin cancers.

The warnings come as the rate of melanoma and non melanoma skin cancers continue to be a growing problem, particularly in northern Europe and North America, where fair skin prevails and outdoor remain popular.

Sunscreen manufacturers have played an active role in the battle protect younger skin, formulating a host of skincare products specially designed for optimal use on younger and more sensitive skin types.

Over the years a growing selection of sunscreen products have started to crowd store shelves. Generally they are formulated with less harsh chemicals, relying on ingredients such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide to provide a minimum recommended SPF of 15.



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