



Canadian
Cancer
Society

Media backgrounder #3: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2014

28 May 2014

TORONTO -

The Canadian Cancer Society has led the way in raising awareness among Canadians about how to protect themselves from UV rays (a known factor that causes cancer), in advocating for youth indoor tanning bans and in funding research about skin cancer.

Raising awareness among Canadians about the dangers of UV radiation

The Canadian Cancer Society works to ensure Canadians have current information about cancer and how to reduce their risk of getting the disease. Conveying information about the dangers of UV radiation and how Canadians can protect themselves from this radiation has been an important part of the Society's prevention message for many years.

Being safe in the sun

- Plan your outdoor activities before 11 a.m. or after 4 p.m., when the sun is not at its strongest, or any time of the day when the UV Index is 3 or less.
- One of the best ways to protect yourself from the sun is to cover up. Choose clothing that is loose fitting, tightly woven and lightweight. Wear a hat with a wide brim that covers your head, face, ears and neck.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or higher and apply it generously to all areas of the skin that are not covered by clothing. If you work outdoors or are planning to be outside most of the day, use an SPF 30. Make sure the product offers both UVA and UVB protection (usually called broad spectrum).
- Sunglasses can help prevent damage to your eyes by blocking a large amount of UV rays. Keep your shades on and make sure your children wear them too.
- Don't use indoor tanning beds. Just like the sun, tanning beds and sun lamps release UV rays that can cause sunburn, damage skin and increase the risk of skin cancer.



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Advocating for a ban on indoor tanning for youth

World-renowned cancer experts have determined that there is a direct link between using indoor tanning equipment and skin cancer. Research shows that people who first start using indoor tanning equipment before the age of 35 have a 59% increased risk of melanoma. UV-emitting devices are classified by the World Health Organization as causing cancer, and WHO recommends that no person under 18 should use tanning beds because of the increased risk of skin cancer.

Because indoor tanning is especially harmful to young people, the Canadian Cancer Society is calling on governments to ban the use of commercial tanning beds by young people. As a leading advocate, the Society has helped pass legislation in the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

The Society also welcomed the federal government's implementation of new health warning regulations for tanning equipment as an important step in the right direction. Stronger and clearer information about the dangers of tanning beds may reduce the number of Canadians exposed to UV radiation from tanning equipment. Working on behalf of Canadians, we will continue to speak up about this important issue.

Skin cancer research

The Canadian Cancer Society is currently funding over \$1.7 million in skin cancer research. In the last 5 years, we have committed almost \$9 million.

Some current research projects include:

Dr Elliot Drobetsky, University of Montreal

A biochemical mechanism called DNA repair is known to protect people against malignant melanoma. Dr Drobetsky's team is studying this DNA repair mechanism, which is missing in some people with malignant melanoma. The knowledge gained from this research can be used to better identify people who are the most likely to get malignant melanoma and to develop better strategies to treat the disease.

Dr Paul Demers, Cancer Care Ontario

Dr Demers and his team are investigating the human impact and economic costs of cancer due to workplace exposures in Canada. They will assess the burden related to occupational factors such as sun exposure, industrial chemicals, metals and night shift work. The end



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result will be Canada-wide and province-specific workplace cancer estimates that can be used to raise awareness and set priorities for prevention activities and research.

Information and support for Canadians with cancer

Support: For more than 10 years, the Canadian Cancer Society has helped people with cancer through its telephone-based peer support program. Specially trained volunteers provide valuable suggestions for people with cancer and their caregivers. As well, the Society's online communities – *CancerConnection.ca* and *ParlonsCancer.ca* – provide a safe and welcoming place for people living with cancer and their caregivers to share experiences and build relationships to support them in their cancer journey.

Information: People with cancer can obtain current, comprehensive information about skin cancer (and many other types of cancer) in a variety of ways from the Society:

- The Society's Cancer Information Service is a unique one-on-one service that meets each person's needs. Call toll-free at 1-888-939-3333 (TTY 1-866-786-3934).
- Our website – cancer.ca – includes comprehensive information about many different types of cancer, including skin cancer.
- The Canadian Cancer Society produces a variety of print materials providing current, comprehensive information about all aspects of cancer – including prevention, treatment and supportive care.

Canadian Cancer Statistics 2014 was prepared through a partnership of the Canadian Cancer Society, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Statistics Canada and provincial and territorial cancer registries.

About the Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national, community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is to eradicate cancer and enhance the quality of life of people living with cancer. Thanks to our donors and volunteers, the Society has the most impact, against the most cancers, in the most communities in Canada. Building on our progress, we are working with Canadians to change cancer forever. For more information visit cancer.ca or call toll-free at 1-888-939-3333 (TTY 1-866-786-3934).