

JULY 2005



CONNECTIONS

LOCAL EFAP NEWS

Vol. 11 No. 7

EFAP/North

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SUN SAFETY

Fun in the sun

Most people love sunny, warm days, when they can get outside for fun and soak up the sun. But sun is one good thing you can have too much of—and not even know you’ve had too much until much later, when, like 60,000 Canadians every year, you’re diagnosed with skin cancer. Fortunately, 19 out of 20 cases of skin cancer diagnosed are less aggressive forms called basal cell or squamous cell cancers, which are fairly easy to treat. But 5% are melanoma, a more serious form.

Know it like the back of your hand

It’s important to know your skin and the signs of skin cancer. If you notice any unusual moles or marks on your skin, watch them closely. The most common skin cancers (basal and squamous cell) can look like a small, skin-coloured or red knob. The more dangerous melanoma usually begins as a mole that seems to change colour or size. What are the signs that tell you to have a doctor look at a mole?

Just remember ABCD:

- **A**symmetry: the mole is not round.
- **B**order: the border is irregular with

jagged edges, not smooth.

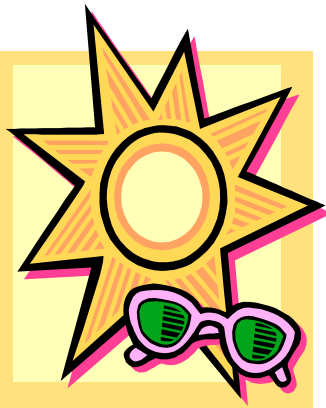
- **C**olour: the colour can be uneven across the mole, it can change, or it may seem very different from the other moles on your body.
- **D**iameter: cancerous moles are usually larger than 6 mm (the size of a pea or a pencil eraser).

Protect them while they’re young

Skin cancer is usually caused by the skin’s exposure to ultraviolet rays from the sun. The more sun you’re exposed to over your lifetime, the higher your risk of developing cancer.

It’s estimated that up to 80% of a person’s total exposure to the sun happens before 18 years of age. Because of this, it’s good to teach children healthy sun habits from the start. One serious sunburn in childhood can increase future cancer risk by as much as 50%.

Babies under 6 months old are especially susceptible to the glare of sunshine and should be kept out of the sun completely. They’re too young for sunscreen, so keep the baby in the shade and covered as much as possible. Don’t forget that the sun can reflect off shiny surfaces and swimming pools, so keep babies well shaded from all directions at all times.



Have a Safe & Healthy Summer

CONNECTIONS

No such thing as a healthy tan

There is a common myth that if a person tans well, they're protected from these harmful rays. Not true! While it is true that fair-haired, blue-eyed people are most prone to burning, and therefore are more susceptible to the sun's rays, even "healthy" tans are really just damage control—they're your body's way of trying to protect itself from the sun. But the damage is already done and can't be reversed. Years of sun worshipping, be it outside or in a tanning salon, will eventually show up later on in life as wrinkles, poor skin elasticity, and possible skin cancer.

The sun, however, is also very important to our health. It provides us with vitamin D (which we need for our bones), and it can lift our spirits. In fact there's a form of depression (S.A.D.) that can happen when there's more darkness than daylight; sufferers feel "down" during the winter and much better when summer comes.

As with most good things, moderation and good sense are the keys. The goal is to have fun outside but to stay safe at the same time. Here are some basic rules:

- **Cover up whenever possible. A long cotton skirt, for example, might feel cooler on a hot day than a pair of shorts, and will help guard you from the sun.**
- **Wear a hat. Hats keep the sun's rays off the scalp, face, and back of the neck, prone areas for skin cancer.**
- **Use sunscreen whenever you're outside, even if the sun doesn't seem particularly strong. Damaging ultraviolet rays can penetrate through clouds, so don't take a chance.**
- **Avoid the sun when it's at its peak (between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.)**
- **If you take prescription drugs, check to see if they can make you more sensitive to the sun.**

If, despite being careful, you still get a sunburn, treat it as you would any other kind of burn:

- **Apply cool, wet compresses for 24 to 48 hours.**
- **Don't apply skin creams within the first 2 days.**
- **Drink a lot of water to keep from dehydration.**

Very severe burns, the kind that produce blisters, are often treated in clinics with dressings. If you're not sure if your burn is severe, have it checked by a professional.

HAVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY SUMMER!

North Bay General Hospital



EFAP committee members Lisa Mellow, Arlene Barber, Pat Smith and Rita La-chapelle (pictured left to right) were serving up some wonderful seasonal fruit and dip to the staff at the

annual EFAP Fruit and Juice Days. This event was held June 29th at the Scollard site and June 30th at the McLaren site.

A big thank you goes out to all of the staff who helped organize and run this event, as well as all of the staff members who attended helping to make our hard work a success. It is always good to see the staff take time to enjoy a break and the friendship of other staff members. Keep an eye open for our next event which will be our Bagel and Juice Days in the fall.

Don't forget that EFAP's counselling services are available to all staff, retirees and their dependent family members through the independently run and confidential services at the EFAP office by calling 494-8086. If you have any questions or concerns about this service you may contact any of the committee members.

Have a happy and healthy summer!

Lisa Mellow, EFAP Committee Chair
