



News release: I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream for SUNSCREEN!

The Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) would like to remind residents the importance of sun safety and help educate on selecting the right sunscreen and applying the product correctly.

The sun protection factor (SPF) number on sunscreens refers to the amount of time it takes for your skin to burn without any protection and how long it would take if the appropriate amount of sunscreen is applied. An SPF 30 product will protect your skin 30 times longer from burning as compared to no product. This number is the optimal exposure and is dependent on how much to apply, how long the product has been applied, and other factors such as amount of sweating or exposure to water. Sunscreens with higher SPF ratings tend to block slightly more UVB rays. For example, SPF 15 blocks 93% UVB rays and SPF 30 and higher block 97% UVB rays. There are no products that offer 100% protection.

“Most people know they should wear sunscreen,” notes community pharmacist, Kelda Newport, “but many become overwhelmed when trying to select the right product”.

Following are a few tips on selecting a product and applying it correctly:

- Start by looking for one with the Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) approval.
- Look for a broad-spectrum product - one that protects for UVA and UVB rays.
- Look for a product with 30 SPF or higher.
- For activities in the water or that cause sweating, use a water-resistant product.
- The product should be non-comedogenic, non-irritating and hypo-allergenic. Avoid products with PABA if allergic or have sensitivities.
- Check the expiry date - sunscreens do expire.
- Apply generous amounts to exposed skin. The average adult needs two to three tablespoonfuls to cover their entire body and a teaspoonful to cover the face. Don't forget the ears, neck, nose, bald spots, backs of hands and tops of feet. Use lip balm to protect the lips and reapply at least every hour.
- Put sunscreen on first and then apply makeup or insect repellent.
- Do not spray aerosol or pump products directly on to the face - spray on hands and apply. Be careful applying around the eyes and mouth.
- Apply 20 to 30 minutes before sun exposure.
- Reapply after about 40 minutes of swimming or sweating.

Sunscreens should not be used as the sole protection against the sun.

- Use other forms such as shade, hats, clothing, and sunglasses as forms of protection from the harmful rays of the sun.

- When possible, avoid sun exposure between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when the UV rays are the strongest.

PANL is also reminding residents to speak to a local pharmacist about photosensitizing medications that can cause an individual to be more sensitive to the sun and more likely to burn.

PANL is the voice of pharmacists, with membership including over 700 pharmacists, 160 pharmacy students and 150 pharmacies. PANL advocates for pharmacists as health care team members integral to the effective and efficient delivery of health services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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