

Friday 25 May 2018

STAY SAFE IN THE SUN THIS SUMMER BY FOLLOWING THE NEW ECL SUN SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Brussels, 25 May – As summer is fast approaching in Europe, the Association of European Cancer Leagues has launched, during the European Week Against Cancer (EWAC), the latest update of the ECL Sun Safety Recommendations, outlining the key steps you can take to protect yourself in the sun. The recommendations provide 9 key messages based on the latest available scientific evidence about the causes of skin cancer and the effective ways to reduce skin cancer risk.

Exposure from Ultraviolet (UV) rays – from the sun and sunbeds / solariums – is the leading cause of skin cancer. Therefore, the messages are designed to prioritise those actions to be taken to protect against excessive exposure: limiting time in the sun, seeking shade, wearing protective clothing, and sensible use of sunscreen. Of special importance is the advice to protect children from sun exposure as the earlier in life your skin is exposed, the more time the damage will have to accumulate. The rapid growth in the body during childhood makes them especially vulnerable to damage from the sun.

Sakari Karjalainen MD PhD, President of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) and Secretary General of the Cancer Society of Finland, commented: “Although skin cancer is amongst the most common of cancers, it is also highly preventable. According to the WHO, 4 out of 5 cases of skin cancer can be prevented by taking the necessary steps to protect yourself and your children from harmful UV exposure. I am, therefore, delighted to see that the update of the ECL sun safety recommendations provides the public with a set of very clear, easy-to-follow advice on how to be safe in the sun. The strong recommendation against sunbed use is very welcome, as is the focus on protecting children, as harmful exposure at an early age is a key factor for skin cancer risk in later life.”

First published in 2008, the sun safety recommendations have been revised following an online consultation of cancer leagues and external partners, and were adopted during a dedicated technical workshop involving leading experts in the field. This workshop was supported through an unrestricted grant by L’Oréal Garnier International.

To learn more about the recommendations, please visit:

www.europeancancerleagues.org.



ECL SUN SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS¹

Excessive UV exposure causes premature skin ageing and skin cancer!

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LIMIT TIME IN THE MIDDAY SUN

Avoid direct sun exposure when the sun is the strongest, typically between the hours of 11:00 and 15:00 but can be longer depending on where you are.
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SEEK SHADE

Seek shade between the hours with most intense UV-radiation. Even in the shade, be aware of reflections from surroundings such as water, sand, and snow, as these can increase UV-exposure.
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WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND SUNGLASSES

Wear clothing to cover your arms and legs. Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade your face and neck. Wear sunglasses that absorb UVR to reduce the risk of eye damage. Tightly-woven fabrics offer more protection against UV rays.
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USE SUNSCREENS

No sunscreen can provide complete protection. Sunscreens should be used in conjunction with shade, clothing, hats and sunglasses, not instead of them. Never use sunscreen to prolong your exposure to the sun. Use sunscreens with at least SPF 30, with both UVA and UVB filters. Apply generously 30 minutes before sun exposure. Reapply every 2 - 3 hours. Do not forget sensitive areas such as lips and ears.
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PROTECT CHILDREN

Apply all above recommendations with extra care to children. The younger you are, the more vulnerable you are. Infants under 6 months of age should be kept out of the sun.
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KNOW HOW YOUR SKIN REACTS IN THE SUN

For example, if you are fair-skinned, red-haired or freckled, you are most sensitive to the rays of the sun.
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USE THE UV INDEX (UVI)² TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Find out the UV Index through official sources.³ Be aware that skin damage occurs when the UV Index radiation level is at 3 (moderate) and higher.
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DO NOT USE SOLARIUMS / SUNBEDS

Sunbeds increase the risk of skin cancer and cause premature ageing of the skin and harm to the eyes. There is no such thing as a "healthy" or safe tan. Tanning on a sunbed does not provide a better base for later additional tanning in the sun.
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KNOW YOUR SKIN

Check your skin regularly and be aware of any changes, moles that change size, shape or colour, or new moles. If you notice any changes, consult a health professional.

REMEMBER:

- Be careful of the sun no matter where you are – at home, work, school, daycare, etc., and not just at the beach and mountains or during holidays!
- The more recommendations you follow, the lower your skin cancer risk will be.

¹ These recommendations are the result of an online consultation among cancer league representatives and external partners, and a workshop which took place in Brussels in April 2018.

² The official UV index used worldwide. More information can be found at the World Health Organization website: http://www.who.int/uv/intersunprogramme/activities/uv_index

³ Each country has official sources for the UV Index. WHO has provided a list of over 30 reputable online sources: <http://www.who.int/uv/resources/link/indexlinks/en/>

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN CANCER LEAGUES (ECL)

The vision of Association of European Cancer Leagues is for a Europe Free of Cancers. The role of the Association of European Cancer Leagues is to facilitate the collaboration between cancer leagues throughout Europe and to influence EU and pan-European policies. The mission of the Association of European Cancer Leagues is to influence and improve cancer control and cancer care in Europe through collaboration between its members in their fight against cancer. Currently, ECL has 26 members in 23 countries in the wider European region.

ECL is supported through an operating grant via the Third EU Health Programme 2014-2020. The views expressed are those of ECL and cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency or any other body of the European Union.

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ABOUT THE EUROPEAN WEEK AGAINST CANCER

European Week Against Cancer (EWAC) takes place between 25 and 31 May each year and is concluded by the World No Tobacco Day on 31 May. During EWAC, cancer charities, European policy-makers and general public engage in various activities connected to awareness raising about cancer prevention, access to treatment and support for patients and cancer survivors.

www.weekagainstcancer.org

