



Absent-minded teens – exposed and burnt reveals new Cancer Council research

Main reason for getting sunburnt - “I forgot to protect myself”

Teens continue to put themselves at unnecessary risk of skin cancer by spending excessive time in the sun and forgetting to protect themselves, according to new Cancer Council research.

Findings from the Cancer Council’s National Sun Protection Survey released today show teens spend an average of two hours (1hr 51mins) in the sun during peak UV, with almost a third who get sunburnt saying they “forgot” to protect themselves.

Announcing the results to launch National Skin Cancer Action Week (16-22 Nov) – www.cancer.org.au/skincancerweek, Cancer Council Australia CEO, Professor Ian Olver, said that while the research showed adults were behaving more responsibly and burning less, teens weren’t absorbing the SunSmart message as effectively.

“One in four teens is still getting sunburnt on a typical summer weekend, compared with just 14% of adults,” Professor Olver said*. “Adults are clearly getting the message, but we need to more effectively target younger people.

“More than 430,000 Australians get skin cancer and 1600 Australians die from it each year, yet most skin cancer is preventable simply by being SunSmart.”

Chair of Cancer Council Australia’s National Skin Cancer Committee, Craig Sinclair, said fewer teens were deliberately seeking a tan, but were still spending too long in the sun without adequate protection. “Fewer adults are outdoors during peak UV (down from 73% in 2003-04 to 67%), but teens are out in large numbers (82%),” Mr Sinclair said. “Only 4% wear a wide-brimmed hat, compared to 24% of adults.

“Among teens who saw media reports about Vitamin D, 17% said the reports made them think they needed to go out in the sun more without protection, in order to get enough Vitamin D*”.

Australasian College of Dermatologists Honorary Secretary, Dr Stephen Shumack, said skin cancer in young people was more common than thought. “We regularly see the effects of sun damage in young people, with patients in their 20s sometimes requiring disfiguring treatments.”

Media materials/audio grabs/survey results including state/territory breakdowns:
www.cancer.org.au/sunsurvey

Interviews with experts and case studies:

National: Lesley Branagan 0439-827-781, Glen Turner 0412-443-212

NSW:	Kim Ibrahim 0411-0408-647	Vic:	Jane Thomas 0408-567-521
Qld:	Lisa Naumann 0421-038-824	ACT:	David Wild 02-6257-9999
Tas:	Lawson Ride 0418-129-757	WA:	Bridget Egan 0412-005-222
SA:	Jessica Playford 0400-855-244	NT:	Helen Smith 0407-556-555