



# Media Release

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May 6, 2019

## **The Skin Doesn't Forget: Practice Sun Safety**

Sun Awareness Week, May 13 – 19, reminds us about protecting ourselves from the harmful effects of the sun. Ultra-violet radiation, from the sun or artificial tanning, is the number one cause of skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in Canada.

A *Sun Safety Selfie* contest, sponsored by Public Health, invites youth, aged 12 – 25 years, who live in Grey Bruce to participate by posting pictures of themselves demonstrating sun safety. Visit the Grey Bruce Health Unit's Facebook after May 13, for more information and to enter.

It is not the sun's heat, but the ultra-violet (UV) index that is the best indicator of when we need to protect against damage. The UV index is part of most weather forecasts. If it is 3 or higher, precautions are needed, even on cloudy days. In general, we need to be more careful from April to September, between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., when the sun's rays can be the most harmful.

Young people are the most vulnerable to harm from the sun's rays. Babies less than 12 months should not be exposed to direct sunlight. Given that people often receive the majority of their lifetime sun exposure before age 18, sun safety is especially important for children and young adults to avoid serious damage that may show up later in life as cancer, premature aging or cataracts. To help reduce the risk:

- Protect your skin as much as possible when the UV index is 3 or higher.
- Seek shade or bring your own (like an umbrella).
- Wear clothing and a wide-brimmed hat to cover as much skin as possible.
- Generously apply, and periodically re-apply SPF 30 sun screen labelled "broad spectrum" and "water-resistant" to exposed skin. Sun screen lip balm is also recommended.
- Wear sunglasses or prescription glasses with UV protection lenses. Because the sun's rays that cause damage to the eyes are present throughout the day, and all year long, eye protection may be needed at times when skin protection is not.
- Never use artificial tanning equipment or purposely try to get a tan.

Remember that tanned skin is damaged skin. The tan will fade, but the skin doesn't forget.

### **For more information:**

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A healthier future for all.

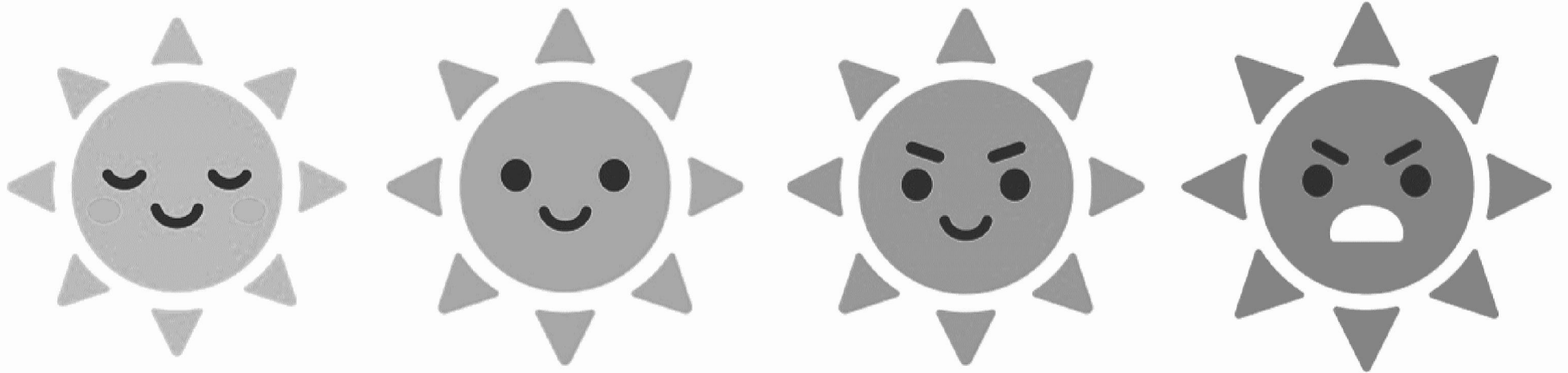
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