

Parents risk skin cancer by not practising what they preach

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Forty per cent of UK parents (which equates to around 4.5 million) of children aged 16 or under admit they often forget to protect their skin in strong sun because they are concentrating on protecting their children instead, a new survey by Cancer Research UK and NIVEA SUN reveals today.

While over four fifths (85 per cent) of parents surveyed are aware that too much exposure to UV radiation from the sun can increase their risk of skin cancer, less than half (47 per cent) normally take as much care to protect their own skin as they do to protect their children's. Millions of parents are frequently forgetting to look after their own skin in strong sunshine, leaving them in danger of sunburn, which can increase the risk

of skin cancer.

With Britain currently enjoying a spate of hot weather, and school holidays just starting, Cancer Research UK and NIVEA SUN are encouraging parents across the UK to enjoy the sun safely, whether at home or abroad. The research aims to emphasise the importance of parents keeping themselves safe as well as their children and family.

When asked about protecting their children's skin in strong sun in the UK, 62 per cent said they always ensure that their child is wearing at least factor 15 [sunscreen](#) compared with only 27 per cent who always apply it to their own skin.

Similarly, more than half (52 per cent) make sure their children are always covered up with clothing, a hat or sunglasses in the UK when the sun is strong while only one fifth (19 per cent) of parents do the same; and while over two fifths (43 per cent) ensure their children spend time in the shade, less than a quarter (22 per cent) spend time in the shade themselves. What's more, only 50 per cent of parents surveyed who have been abroad always apply at least factor 15 when on holiday abroad and in strong sun, compared to over two thirds (68 per cent) of those who have been abroad with their children who always ensure they do the same for their children.

Yinka Ebo, senior health information officer at Cancer Research UK, said: "Understandably, when we do get the chance to enjoy some sunshine, here in the UK or abroad, we're keen to make the most of it! But it's really important to enjoy the sun safely and take care not to burn.

"We want to help parents set the right example for their children so they grow up with a healthy attitude towards the sun. When the sun is strong, it's important that all family members use a combination of shade, clothing and at least factor 15 sunscreen to keep their skin protected

from harmful UV rays. This will help prevent [sunburn](#), which isn't only painful and unpleasant – it also increases the risk of skin cancer."

The partnership between Cancer Research UK and NIVEA SUN launched in July 2012 and aims to raise millions of pounds for Cancer Research UK's vital [skin cancer](#) research over three years. As well as fundraising for the charity, NIVEA SUN will be working with Cancer Research UK to promote key sun safety messaging through an advertising campaign which will highlight simple tips that people can follow to enjoy the sun safely:

- Spend time in the shade if your shadow is shorter than you. If your shadow is shorter than you are, then the sun is strong. During the UK summer, the sun is at its strongest between 11am and 3pm
- Wear a hat, t-shirt and [sunglasses](#) when the sun's strong. Wide brimmed hats or foreign legion style caps are best
- Cancer Research UK recommends you use at least factor 15 sunscreen with a high star rating. Sunscreen rubs off easily if you sweat, swim or change clothes. So whether you're in the UK or abroad, when the sun is strong remember to apply generously and reapply regularly

Graham Taylor at NIVEA SUN said: "It's great to see how much care [parents](#) are taking to look after their children's skin in this [hot weather](#) but we want to remind them not to neglect themselves. We all need a bit of [sun](#) to keep us happy and healthy, but the important thing is for the whole family to enjoy it responsibly and safely."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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