



Sunsmart for Children and Young People

#SunSmart #ICPN #SunSmartkids

With over 13,000 cases diagnosed annually, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Ireland. This is twice the number compared to 10 years ago and is projected to more than double again by 2045¹.

The [National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan](#) aims to increase awareness and adoption of skin cancer prevention behaviours.

Most skin cancers could be prevented by protecting skin. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the main risk factor responsible for skin cancers. It is emitted naturally from the sun and also comes from artificial sources such as sunbeds.

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to UV skin damage. Childhood sunburn, excess sun exposure and use of sunbeds increase the risk of developing skin cancers later in life². Severe sunburn during childhood (three or more instances before age 20) is associated with two to four times higher risk of developing melanoma skin cancer in later life². Yet, the "[Children's exposure to ultraviolet radiation – a risk profile for future skin cancers in Ireland](#)" report found nearly 90% of 10 to 17-year olds said they have experienced sunburn in their lifetime.

UV skin damage can be prevented by following the simple Healthy Ireland SunSmart 5 S's.

We are aiming to engage children and young people and their carers to follow the SunSmart 5 S's each year from April to September, when UV from the sun is strongest in Ireland.

Overarching message:

Protect children's skin, follow the Healthy Ireland SunSmart 5 S's from April to September:

- **Slip** on clothing that covers skin such as, long sleeves, collared t-shirts;
- **Slop** on sunscreen on exposed areas, using factor 30+ for adults and 50+ for children;
- **Slap** on a wide- brimmed hat;
- **Seek** shade - especially if outdoors between 11am and 3pm - and always use a sunshade on a child's buggy;
- **Slide** on sunglasses to protect your eyes.

Target Audience

This message is focused on children and young people, and their carers

¹ National Cancer Registry. Cancer incidence projections for Ireland 2020-2045. Cork: NCRI; 2019

² Greinert, R., de Vries, E., Erdmann, F., Espina, C., Auvinen, A., Kesminiene, A., et al. (2015). European Code against Cancer 4th Edition: Ultraviolet radiation and cancer. Cancer Epidemiology, 39 Suppl 1:S75-83.

How organisations that care for children and young people can be SunSmart

- Include educational resources for staff on the importance of sun protection for children: [SunSmart Education](#) slide
- Share SunSmart advice with parents and carers: [Playing Outdoors: Skin protection for children factsheet / Irish version](#)
- Create a [SunSmart kit](#) with kids / [Irish version](#)
- Share the resources [colour in the SunSmart picture](#) with kids / [Irish version](#)
- Ensure staff act as positive role models following the SunSmart behaviours
- Remind children and their parents/carers to protect their skin when outdoors

If you need additional information or resources contact: prevention@cancercontrol.ie

How children can take part and be SunSmart:

- Create a [SunSmart Kit](#):

Create a SunSmart kit by filling a bag with SunSmart supplies (wide brimmed hat, sunscreen SPF50+, long sleeve top and sunglasses). The kit can help both parents and children to routinely take this bag with them on their outdoor activities. See SunSmart Kit instruction sheet for how to build a SunSmart kit.

- Colour in the [SunSmart picture](#)

Colour in the SunSmart picture using the “paint” application on computer or print out to colour in. Send a photograph of your coloured in picture to @HealthyIreland on twitter.

Raise Awareness of SunSmart

We are asking you to get involved to promote awareness of the SunSmart messages.

Social Media Posts

Below are social posts you can use and you will find videos and images attached to partner pack.

Please find social media images for your use attached to partner pack. Images/video are also linked below:

[SunSmart 5 S's children video](#)

[SunSmart Be Prepared Be SunSmart Toddler image](#)

[SunSmart Enjoy the sun safely Be SunSmart kids in shade image](#)

[SunSmart Protect your child's skin from the sun Baby in pram image](#)

For more social media assets or information on raising awareness of the risks associated with exposure of unprotected skin to the sun contact prevention@cancercontrol.ie

Hashtags: #SunSmart #ICPN #SunSmartKids

Twitter handles: @HSELive @hseNCCP @HealthyIreland

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/HSELive/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/irishhealthservice>

| Sample Social Posts | Link |
|---------------------|------|
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|---|----------------------|
| Playing and spending time outdoors is a fun and vital part of childhood. But remember to protect babies and children's skin from the sun, even on cloudy days. Being #SunSmart as a child can help prevent skin cancer in adulthood. #ICPN #SunSmartKids | NCCP |
| Be prepared to protect your child's skin from the sun from April to September, even on cloudy days. To best protect skin from the sun and sunburn, you and your child should be SunSmart: Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide. ☀️ #SunSmart #ICPN #SunSmartKids | NCCP |
| Babies and children have very sensitive skin. Getting sunburnt as a child increases the risk of skin cancer in later life. To best protect skin you and your child should follow the SunSmart's 5's. #SunSmart #ICPN #SunSmartKids | NCCP |
| There are simple things you can do to reduce the risk of sunburn and keep children safe in the sun. Find shade to play under, wear wide-brimmed hats and long-sleeved shirts and apply sunscreen on exposed skin. ☂️ Be #SunSmart #ICPN #SunSmartKids | NCCP |
| Always protect your children and babies skin from the sun. For babies under 1 year old, keep them in the shade and dress them in loose clothing that covers the skin. Be #SunSmart #ICPN #SunSmartKids | NCCP |

All Resources

[SunSmart Kit Instruction Sheet](#)

[SunSmart Colouring in Sheet](#)

[SunSmart Playing Outdoors: Skin protection for children factsheet](#)

[SunSmart Education Slides for staff working with children](#)

SunSmart video attached to partner pack

Thank you very much for your help



Supported by

Irish Cancer Prevention Network



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service