

# *Background Information*

This manual was developed for health care professionals in conjunction with The SunSafe Project of Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, NH. The SunSafe Project was a skin cancer prevention study funded by the National Cancer Institute. The project engaged health care professionals, elementary school teachers and administrators, child care providers, recreation department personnel, parents, and children. It effectively promoted sun protection for children ages 2-9 to reduce their risk of later developing of skin cancer.\* In addition to this manual, health professionals participating in the SunSafe Project received: a grand rounds on sun protection for children, a practice visit by a SunSafe facilitator, and any necessary follow-up support.

The core message is:

**Avoid** or limit exposure during the sun's peak hours of 11am and 2pm.

**Block** the sun's rays by using a sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher.

**Cover-up** with clothing and a hat with a brim.

Guidelines developed by: American Academy of Dermatology

\*Project Publications :

Dietrich, AJ, AL Olson, CH Sox, CW Winchell, J Grant-Petersson, DW Collison. Sun protection counseling for children: New Hampshire primary care practice patterns and the impact of an intervention. (under review, Archives of Family Medicine)

Grant-Petersson, J, AJ Dietrich, CH Sox, CW Winchell, & MM Stevens. Promotion of sun protection in elementary schools and child care settings: The SunSafe Project. Journal of School Health (slated for publication March 1999)

AJ Dietrich, AL Olson, CH Sox, MM Stevens, TD Tosteson, T Ahles, CW Winchell, J Grant-Petersson, DW Collison, R Sanson-Fisher. 1998. A community-based randomized trial encouraging sun protection for children. Pediatrics 102(6): URL: <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/102/6/e64>

Olson, AL, AJ Dietrich, CH Sox, MM Stevens, CW Winchell, TA Ahles. 1997. Solar protection of children at the beach. Pediatrics 99(6): URL: <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/99/6/e2>

## *About this manual:*

This manual will help you deliver sun protection advice to children and their parents as a regular part of your practice. The SunSafe Approach (page 7) provides the framework to make sun protection counseling natural without taking extra time. We urge promotion of “sun safe” behavior just as you promote immunization and seatbelt use.

Contained in this manual:

- ✓ Why sun protection
  - Current facts about skin cancer
- ✓ What we know about sun protection behaviors of children: New Hampshire as a case study

SunSafe Approach:

- ✓ Approaches to implementing the SunSafe message
- ✓ Common challenges by concerned parents and suggested responses
- ✓ Tools to help deliver the SunSafe message
- ✓ Planning worksheet to record your plan and ordering information for chosen tools

Appendices:

- ✓ US Preventive Services Task Force skin cancer guidelines
- ✓ Sample Patient Letter

*The SunSafe Project's overall aim is to promote healthy outdoor behavior that lasts a lifetime.*

