

# TOGETHER FOR SUN SAFETY

FAMILY SUN SAFETY PROJECT

Arizona Cancer Center, Behavioral Sciences Program

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## An Arizona Family Sun Safety Project

Arizona is both blessed and burdened with over 350 days of sunshine per year. At first, you might wonder how this beautiful, year-round weather could create a burden. However, the state's sunny, cloudless weather conditions help contribute to its high skin cancer incidence. Southern Arizona has the highest rates of skin cancer in the United States and the second highest rates in the world.

Skin cancer is considered an epidemic in the United States. The National Cancer Institute recognized the magnitude of the problem and has responded by funding six research projects, throughout the nation, to study people's sun safety practices. The project sites are:

- ☀ The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
- ☀ Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, New Hampshire
- ☀ The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois
- ☀ San Diego State University, San Diego, California
- ☀ University of California, San Francisco, California
- ☀ Roger Williams Hospital, Providence, Rhode Island

The six studies share two common goals:

- ☀ to determine what local community members and health care professionals already know about skin cancer prevention
- ☀ to educate the public and health care professionals about increasing their sun safety practices.

The Arizona Cancer Center at The University of Arizona is conducting their study in Tucson. The Family Sun Safety Project is working with families who have school-aged children attending public elementary schools or who receive their medical care through local pediatricians.

The four school districts participating in the project are Amphitheater Public Schools, Catalina Foothills School District, Flowing Wells School District, and Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). The participating pediatricians' practices include Canyon Pediatrics, Catalina Pediatrics, Children's Medical Center of Tucson, Orange Grove Pediatrics, and Pueblo Ridge Physicians.

## Who Makes Up Our Project Team?

The Family Sun Safety Project began in June 1994 and is directed by David Buller, Ph.D. He is the Director of the Behavioral Sciences Section in the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at the Arizona Cancer Center. He is also a professor in the Department of Communication at The University of Arizona.

A team of eight faculty investigators provide leadership and make decisions about project design, data collection, and evaluation procedures.

Eleven staff members, graduate students, and undergraduate students coordinate the day-to-day activities for this large research effort. They work with the staff at the schools and community pediatricians, oversee the collection of data, conduct training sessions, and develop educational materials for the project participants.

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Twelve professionally-trained interviewers conduct the telephone and onsite interviews with parents.

Our entire team is committed to helping Arizona's families learn more about the sun and sun safety.

## What Is Sun Safety?

Sun safety is protecting your skin from the ultraviolet radiation (UVR) produced by the sun's rays and artificial tanning equipment. Overexposure to the sun can cause damage to the skin in the form of aging, sunburn, and skin cancer. By adopting positive attitudes and sun safe behaviors, your family may reduce their chances of these harmful effects!

Between now and the end of the summer, you will receive brochures, further newsletters, and cards containing sun

safety information. For your convenience these items will be mailed to your home. The easy-to-read materials are designed for your whole family to enjoy. Contemporary news, myths about the sun, and ways to encourage you and your family to adopt sun-safe habits are examples of the topics that will be covered in the brochures and newsletters.

We thank you for participating in this skin cancer prevention project and look forward to providing valuable information to you and your family over the next several months. One of our interviewers will call you again in September to conduct a follow-up telephone interview.

If you have any questions or concerns between now and then, please feel free to call us at the telephone number listed in the Project Information section on page 4 of this newsletter.

## Meet the Sun Safety Squad!

We would like to introduce you to our Sun Safety Squad. The squad members will appear on some of the printed materials that you will receive in the mail. We hope they will remind you and your family to practice sun safe behaviors.

Large umbrellas, like Ella Umbrella, provide shade while you are outdoors. Wearing a wide-brimmed hat, like Willie Widebrim, protects the ears, face, nose, and neck from the

sun's damaging rays. Large shade trees (we do have them in Arizona!), like Sherman Shadetree, provide shade and help keep you cool, too. Wearing sunscreen, like Susan Sunscreen, helps protect your skin from the harmful rays of the sun.



Sherman Shadetree, Willie Widebrim, Susan Sunscreen, and Ella Umbrella