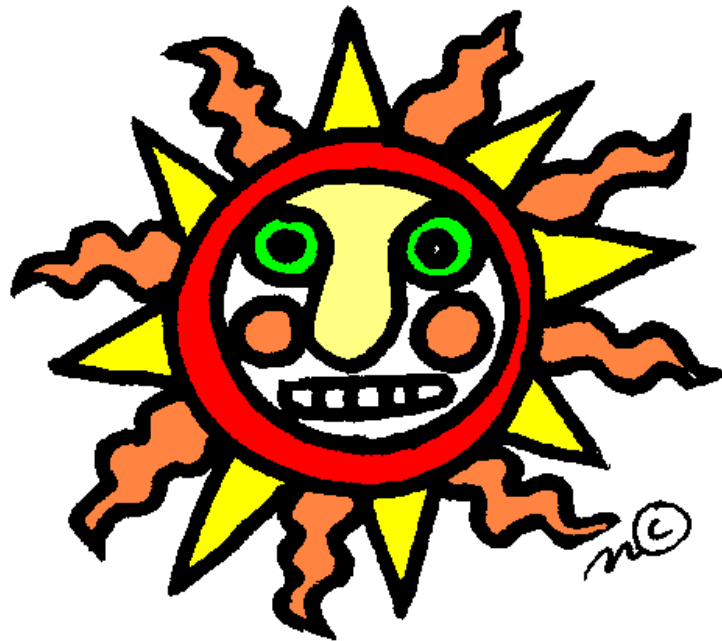


SunSafe in the Middle School Years



Primary Care Practice Manual



Project Background

SunSafe in the Middle School Years was a research project designed to improve sun protection behaviors in middle school students. Funded by the National Cancer Institute and directed by Ardis Olson, M.D., the project worked in ten communities in Vermont and New Hampshire. Middle school is an important time to work with adolescents. They are making more independent health behavior choices but still willing to listen to adult's advise and still influenced by the role modeling of parents, teachers and coaches. Since reducing sun exposure may prevent 90% of skin cancers, the SunSafe Project worked with schools, coaches, town recreation programs, parents, and health care providers to improve middle school students' sun protection behaviors.

Teens in the intervention communities were more likely to use sunscreen and to apply it more thoroughly plus they reported sun protection advice from more adults than those in the control communities. Researchers observed less decline in the percent of body surface area protected at the pool/beach in intervention communities. After the intervention average protected body surface among teens in the intervention communities was significantly greater than in the control communities. This multi-component intervention shows the power of engaging adults across the community as role models and educators to change adolescent sun protection behaviors and thus reduce skin cancer risks.

Why middle school students?

- Only 35% of middle school students protect themselves from sun damage.
- 75% of teens had sunburns in the previous summer.
- 1 or more blistering sunburns before age 20 doubles the risk of melanoma.
- Middle school students start to use indoor tanning lights.
- Children this age start taking responsibility for their health and establish lifetime habits.

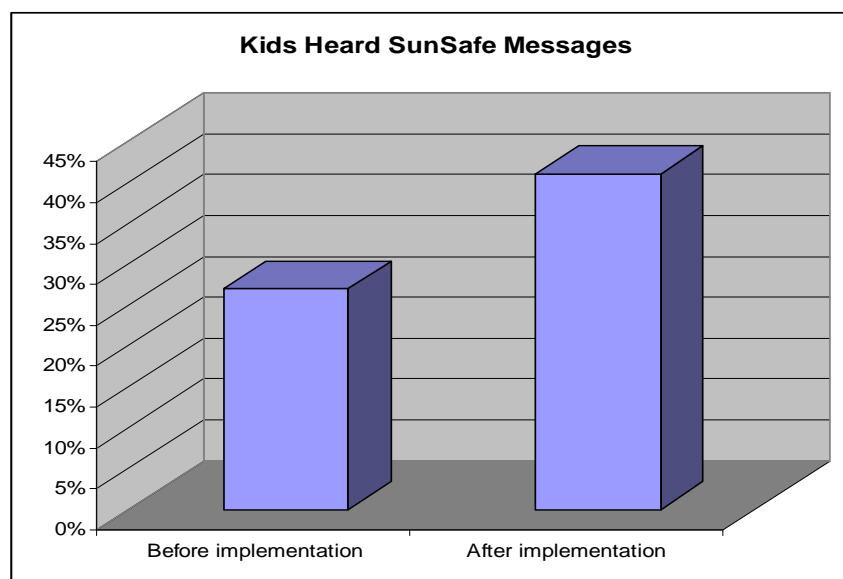
***Children spend almost 3 times
as much time outside as do adults -
Much of our lifetime sun exposure is by age 18***

Why primary care providers?

- 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in his/her lifetime, but reducing sun exposure can prevent 90% of skin cancers.
- Clinicians, as respected health experts, can advise and encourage sun safe behaviors BUT only 32% of middle school children report having been told by their doctor to use sunscreen or other protective measures .
- 84% of your middle school patients understand protecting themselves from sun damage can prevent skin cancer BUT less than one third (29%) use sunscreen and only 7% wear a hat.
- The well child visit is an opportunity to help middle school children learn to take responsibility for their own health habits.

A missed opportunity – 2/3 of middle school children told us that their clinician does not tell them about protecting themselves from sun damage.

We asked teens if they heard about sun protection from the clinician. Teens living in the intervention communities where the pediatric practices had implemented the office systems changes suggested in this manual, teens reported the following.....



SunSafe in the Middle School Years for Primary Care Practices

Clinicians, as respected health experts, are important community proponents and models of healthy behaviors. The well child visit is an opportunity to help middle school children take responsibility for their own health habits, including sun protection. Most of your middle school patients understand that sun protection prevents skin cancer, but few of them have heard messages from their providers. Most data suggests a small percentage of middle school children use sun protection. If adolescents start making UV protection a part of their routine, their risk of skin cancer and other skin problems will be greatly reduced.

Helping your patients to protect themselves from too much sun exposure is an important but often overlooked preventive health message. With a few simple changes to your well-child visits, counseling for sun protection can become a regular part of your patient care. We are offering you suggestions for some office systems tools that you will be able to easily incorporate into your existing practice routine.

The goal is to discuss during well child visits or physicals with 10-13 year old patients and their parents how they can protect their skin from sun damage and why this is important to the child's health.

Everyone in your practice can contribute to educating adolescents and their parents about sun protection. Possible options for incorporating sun protection messages into your practice are:

Activity/Tools	Performed by...
Put up a poster* in the waiting room, exam room, or at the height/weight station <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post UV Index daily 	Receptionist
Put patient education materials* in exam rooms	Nurse/Medical Assistant
Assess and chart current sun protection behaviors	Nurse/Medical Assistant
Discuss sun protection strategies with the middle school patient and their parent	Clinician or Nurse/Medical Assistant

The above division of responsibility merely suggests how sun protection counseling might work in your office. Developing a system for integrating sun protection messages into well child visits in your practice will help kids with this important health habit.

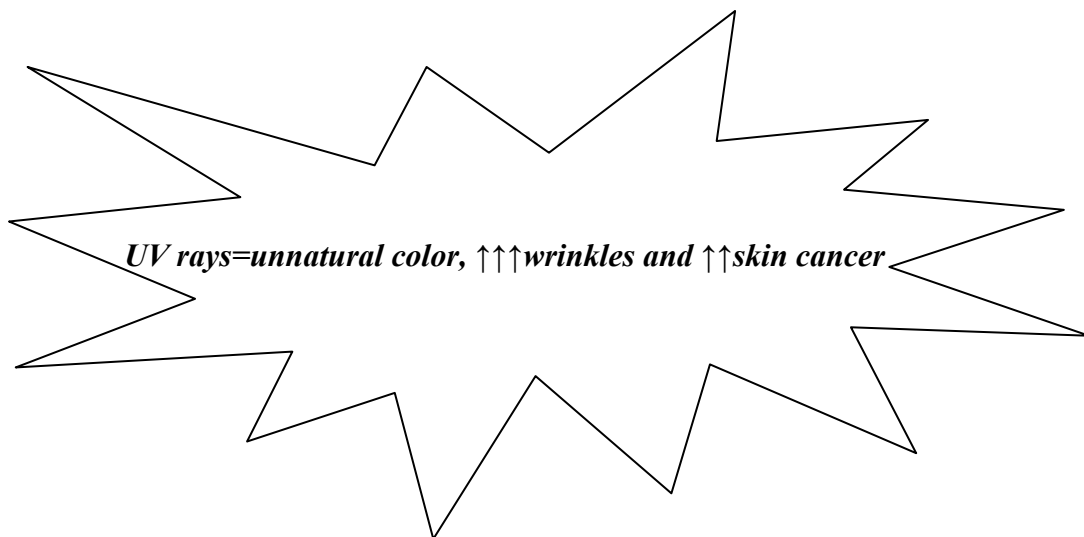
Kids can have FUN IN THE SUN AND BE SUNSAFE TOO.
Protecting skin from sun damage requires minor lifestyle changes.

❖ Middle school students present particular counseling challenges. Prevalent attitudes influence how well they receive messages from authority. Adolescents, in regard to sun protection and behaviors, often assert

- they are not vulnerable.
- skin cancer pertains to adults and is distant to their lives.
- tan skin is attractive.
- protecting skin from the sun too much trouble.

❖ Which messages might work? Adolescents relate best to immediately relevant benefits of protecting skin from the sun.

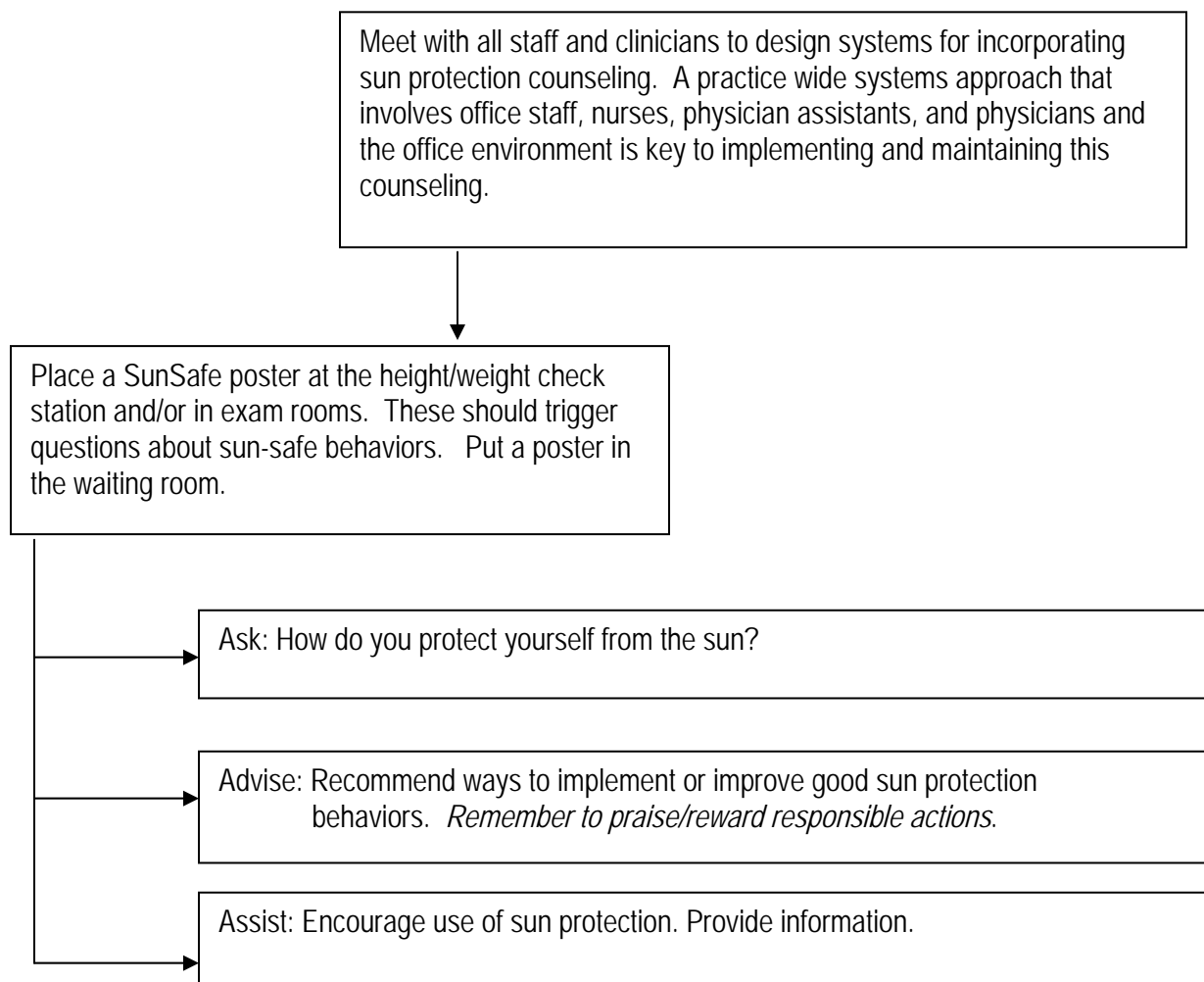
- Protect your and your friends' skin and keep looking good
- Be active outdoors, just remember to protect yourself from sun damage
- Prevent sunburns, it hurts, looks bad and causes wrinkles
- Prevent premature wrinkles, dark tans = deep wrinkles
- Melanoma is the most common cancer for people in their teens and 20's.
- The UV rays from artificial tanning lights BLAST the skin with an unnatural amount of damaging radiation.



Implementing Guide

Clinicians need to talk with kids *early* and *routinely* about protecting their skin and eyes from overexposure to the sun. Kids can have fun outdoors and protect themselves from too much sun. Sun safe habits include: wearing sunscreen, a hat, protective clothing, and sunglasses or finding shade in the middle of the day.

Practices that have successfully integrated SunSafe into their routines have used an approach outlined below.



Possible Responses for Frequent Concerns or Issues

Issue A tan looks healthy (and attractive).

Response Tanned skin is damaged skin. In response to UV rays, your skin produces melanin to try and protect itself. One reason we think a tan looks good because athletes and models are pictured with tanned skin in magazines and movies.

Issue A tan protects your skin from getting burned.

Response A dark tan gives about the same protection as sunscreen with SPF 4. UV damage adds up and causes wrinkles, spots, and skin cancer. Even with sunscreen use a person will get some color, but they should still prevent damage by continuing to use sunscreen. A black person's dark skin gives them the equivalent of a SPF 8. Even a black person should wear sunscreen and protective clothing.

Issue Waterproof sunscreen does not need to be reapplied.

Response Any sunscreen becomes less effective when you swim, sweat, or rub your skin with a towel.
Reapply all sunscreens at least every two hours.

Issue Tanning lights are safer than actual sunlight.

Response UV radiation from tanning lights is very damaging to your skin. Under artificial UV lights a person gets a huge dose of UV in a short time. A tan is your skin's response to radiation exposure and indicates skin damage. UV radiation from tanning lights is also harmful to your eyes.

Issue We all get wrinkled skin when we get older... what I do now won't make any difference.

Response The major cause of wrinkled skin is sun damage, not age.
Exposure to UV rays damages skin and causes premature aging and wrinkling.

Issue I'll worry about skin cancer later -- only older people get skin cancer.

Response Melanoma is the most common cancer among people 25-29 years old and has been diagnosed in teens.

Issue I live in New England – only people who live in places like Florida or Australia have to worry about skin damage from too much sun.

Response Rates of skin cancers in NH have tripled in the past twenty years. Between April and September, intense UV radiation can damage unprotected skin in 15 minutes or less. In the winter, snow reflects UV rays, intensifying radiation damage to bare skin and eyes.

Response Vermont has one of the highest death rates in the US from melanoma. The intensity of the sun's rays between April and September strong enough to hurt unprotected skin in 15 minutes or less.

Issue I only need to wear sunscreen when I vacation some place warm like Florida or go to the beach.

Response Ultraviolet ray intensity and outside temperature are unrelated. The UV Index, not temperature, is the best indicator of UV intensity.

Issue You cannot get sunburned on a cloudy day.

Response Clouds do block some UV rays, so the intensity of UV radiation is less on cloudy days. But when you stay out long enough, you can still get burned. Even though we often have cloudy days in our area or hazy sunshine we still get enough UV to do damage.

Issue Sun protection deprives you of vitamin D which you need.

Response It takes less sun exposure for your body to get the vitamin D it needs than it takes to tan. If we are outside a few times a week it only takes a few minutes to get enough sun to make vitamin D. Also, most people get an adequate amount of vitamin D in their diets. Multivitamins or vitamin-D fortified milk and cereals are additional sources. But

Issue Do I need to wear sunglasses to protect my eyes – I see these sun glasses that say protect from UVA/UVB.

Response Excessive exposure to UV rays is one of the risk factors for cataracts. Cataracts are a leading cause of impaired vision in the U.S. Wearing UVA/UVB sunglasses helps keep eyes healthy.

Issue I wear a sunscreen with a SPF of 45 so I can stay out in the sun for a long time without burning.

Response A sunscreen with a SPF higher than 15 does seem to give a little better protection against sun damage. However, no matter what the SPF you should reapply sunscreen every two hours or after swimming or drying with a towel.

SunSafe in the Middle School Years
Developed at Norris Cotton Cancer Center
E mail sunsafer@dartmouth.edu
Website: <http://sunsafer.dartmouth.edu>

Fun & the Sun: A Skin Protection Guide for Families

Choose and Use a Good Sunscreen

- Broad-spectrum Make sure your sunscreen blocks both UVA and UVB rays. [UVB rays Burn and UVA causes Aging.]
- SPF of at least 15.
- Apply sunscreen liberally.
- Apply 20-30 minutes before going out
- All sunscreen, even waterproof sunscreen, should be reapplied every 2 hours. If you swim, sweat, or towel dry your skin, sunscreen should be reapplied more frequently. The active ingredients in sunscreen wear out in two hours.
- Don't forget lips, ears, feet, hands, bald spots, and the back of your neck.

Seek Shade

- Especially between 11am and 3pm when the sun's rays are most intense.

Wear Protective Clothing

- Hat--especially wide-brimmed hat to protect neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp
- Sunglasses that block 99 to 100% of UVA and UVB rays
- Shirt with sleeves (at least a t-shirt)

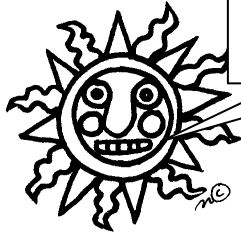
Avoid Tanning Booths

- Tan skin is damaged skin. Artificial UV lamps deliver a huge dose of damaging UV and increase the risk of skin cancer.

Know the UV Forecast

- The UV Index gives the expected noontime UV radiation reaching Earth's surface on a scale of 1 to 10+. The higher the number, the greater the exposure to UV radiation and the greater the need to protect your skin. The UV forecast can be found online: <http://weather.com>

The UV Index		
Index Number	Exposure Level	Minutes to Skin Damage
0-2	Minimal	>60
3-4	Low	30-40
5-6	Moderate	20-30
7-9	High	10-20



Although their sunburns heal quite fast
The damage to skin will always last

Why middle school students:

- Adolescents assume responsibility for their own health and establish lifetime habits
- Young teens are increasing their use of tanning lights. New studies find tanning light users in their 20's have a 150% greater risk than nonusers of developing melanoma. Another study reports people ever visiting a tanning booth were 2.5 times more likely to get squamous cell skin cancer and 1.5 times more likely to develop basal cell skin cancer than those who do not.
- UV rays cause deep damage that leads to deep wrinkles - it is not worth that bronze look!
- 75% of teens had sunburns last summer
- Only 35% of middle school students protect themselves from sun damage



Kids can have FUN IN THE SUN AND BE SUNSAFE TOO. Protecting skin from sun damage requires minor lifestyle changes.

SunSafe in the Middle School Years

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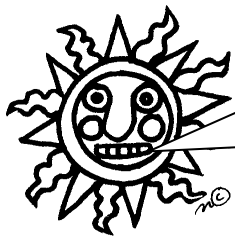
Website:
<http://sunsafe.dartmouth.edu>

SunSafe in the Middle School Years

A skin cancer prevention research project for adolescents. Practitioners are part of the community that educates and influences young teens.



Reducing sun exposure can prevent 90% of skin cancers!



Doctors and parents are the key
To help those kids
hear my plea!

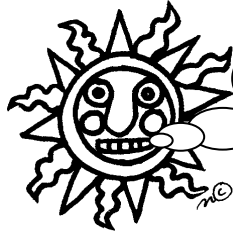
Dear Physicians,

- Sun protection is an important preventive health message
- Primary care offices are places to reach both parents and kids
- You are making a difference!
- Last summer 41% of the kids that we surveyed heard about sun protection from their healthcare provider, up from 32% the summer before

Make it a goal:

- Discuss how they can protect themselves from sun damage
- Discuss why sun protection is important to the child's health

UV protection is important!



Both friend and foe,
that's my plight,
Kids' should be safe
from my UV light

You've been incorporating sun protection messages into your practice.

Contact us at SunSafe in the Middle School Years if you need more materials.

Options for incorporating sun safety messages into your practice:

- ❖ Put up a poster in the waiting room exam room, or at the height and weight station
- ❖ Post the UV Index daily for all patients to see
- ❖ We can provide you with flyers and pamphlets for the exam rooms
- ❖ Discuss sun protection strategies with your patient and their parents
- ❖ Have SunSafe stickers and temporary tattoos available to patients and families
- ❖ Have us come by with the Dermascan for staff education

Adolescents relate best to immediately relevant benefits of protecting their skin from the sun.

Messages that might work...

- *Pain* – avoid the pain of a sunburn
- *It's easy* – being sun safe is easy
 - > Grab and go – put on sunscreen, wear sunglasses, wear protective clothing and wear a hat
- *Enjoy* – you can enjoy the outdoors and protect yourself too
- *Looks* – keep looking good, take care of your skin
- *Damage* – the tan is damage – not a healthy glow – UVA rays from tanning lights DEEPLY damage skin, worse than natural sunlight
- *Wrinkles* – tanning beds and sunburns cause wrinkles
- *Cancer* – melanoma is now the most common cancer in young people

