

As a coach, you have a major influence on your athletes. Not only will you affect the development of their skills and long-term enjoyment of the sport, you will also play a role in their development as individuals. It is important that you have effective resources to help you.

The Coaching Association of Canada, in partnership with the national sport organizations, compiled the following coaching tips.

SunSense guidelines and your risk of skin cancer



SunSense guidelines

It is possible to enjoy healthy outdoor activities while in the sun.

- Reduce sun exposure between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the UV Index is over 3. The sun's rays are at their strongest between these hours. It's easy to remember – during these hours your shadow is shorter than you are. If you can, plan your outdoor activities before 11 a.m. or after 4 p.m.
- Seek shade or create your own shade. When you are outside – especially between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. - try to stay in the shade. Be prepared for places without any shade by taking along an umbrella. With an umbrella you can create shade wherever you need it.
- SLIP! on clothing to cover your arms and legs. Covering your skin will protect it from the sun. Choose clothing that is:
 - loose fitting
 - tightly woven
 - lightweight
- SLAP! on a wide-brimmed hat. Most skin cancers occur on the face and neck. This area needs extra protection. Wear a hat with a wide brim that covers your head, face, ears and neck. Hats without a wide brim, like baseball caps, do not give you enough protection.
- SLOP! on a sunscreen with SPF (Sun Protection Factor) #15 or higher – SPF 30 if you work outdoors or if you will be outside for most of the day. Look for "broad spectrum" on the label. This means that the sunscreen offers protection against 2 types of ultraviolet rays, UVA and UVB. Apply sunscreen generously, 20 minutes before outdoor activities. Reapply often – at least every 2 hours.(and after swimming or exercise that makes you perspire). No sunscreen can absorb all of the sun's rays. Use sunscreen along with shade, clothing and hats – not instead of them. Use sunscreen as a backup in your sun protection plan.
- Keep babies under one year out of the direct sun. Babies need extra protection because their skin is very sensitive. Keep your child's stroller, playpen or carriage in the shade.
- Tanning parlours and sunlamps are not a safe way to tan. Tanning salons do not give you a "safe tan without burning". No tan is a safe tan. A tan is evidence of sun damage. Just like the sun, tanning lights and sun lamps emit ultraviolet rays that can cause sunburn, aging skin and increase your risk of skin cancer. The strength of the ultraviolet rays (especially the UV-A type) may actually be higher in tanning beds than in sunlight. Sun damage doesn't go away ... it adds up!

What else should be part of my sun protection plan?

Wear sunglasses

Sunglasses can help prevent damage to your eyes by blocking a large amount of ultraviolet rays. Keep your shades on and make sure your children wear them too. Choose sunglasses with:

- even shading.
- medium to dark lenses (grey, brown or green tint).
- UVA and UVB protection.

These features can be found in many inexpensive sunglasses.

Your risk of skin cancer

No one is completely safe from the sun. Over time, exposure to UV rays of the sun can cause skin cancer.

The risk of skin cancer today is much greater than it was 20 years ago. The main reason for this is our outdoor lifestyle. We spend more time working and playing outdoors, often without the proper sun protection. We are exposed to more ultraviolet rays because the protective layer of ozone around the earth has become thinner due to the effects of pollution and chemicals.

Skin cancer rates are increasing. The number of cases of skin cancer in Canada has increased by two-thirds since 1990. Anyone born today has a 1 in 7 chance of developing skin cancer in their lifetime.

The risk of skin cancer is higher for people who:

- have light-coloured skin, eyes and hair.
- work, play or exercise in the sun for long periods of time.
- had several blistering sunburns as a child.
- have a family history of skin cancer.

Source: 2002-2004 Canadian Cancer Society. For more information please visit www.cancer.ca or call 1-888-939-3333.

