

Consultations with young people on skin cancer prevention behaviours

Background

The HSE National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) in conjunction with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and the National Participation Office undertook a consultation with young people on skin cancer prevention behaviours in 2021.

Why

We know it is very important to protect skin from the sun. Sun exposure and using sunbeds can increase the risk of skin cancer. We want to learn how to support children and young people to protect their skin to reduce risk of skin cancer in later life.

Aim

The aim was to inform the development of initiatives to engage children and young people in skin cancer prevention behaviours.

How

We consulted with children and young people aged 12 – 18 years old from across the Republic of Ireland virtually using the Zoom platform between October – November 2021.

What we learned

Ways to encourage young people to wear protective clothing and seek shade



- Use images that are clear and easy to understand
- Emphasise consequence of not using skin protection (the negatives)
- Create a video on the consequences of sunburn
- Workshops with HSE in schools
- Free or low-cost sunscreen

What prompts young people to protect skin in the sun



- Family member advises young person to use sunscreen or to wear a hat to protect skin
- Having skin that damages/burns easily from the sun
- Previous experience of sunburn
- Knowing the ageing effects of the sun on skin

Ways to encourage young people to wear protective clothing and seek shade



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Best ways to get information to young people



- TikTok, Snapchat, Spotify, Instagram
- Youtubers or Irish social media influencers
- Forced social media adverts
- School (counsellors and SPHE, homework activities or links to videos, workshop for older pupils in secondary school e.g., transition year students)
- Cosmetic professionals talking about skincare
- Video on correct way to apply sunscreen
- Parent campaign

Ways to encourage young people to follow 5 S's messages

- Simple messaging
- Information on different types of protection
- Promotion via social media (e.g., TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram)
- Credible sources (e.g., doctors/dermatologists)
- Have sunscreen available in the schools
- Make social media videos more fun – have someone going through the process of following the 5 S's
- Reminder from parents

-  **S**lip on clothing that covers your skin, long sleeves, collared t-shirts
-  **S**top on sunscreen on exposed areas using factor 50+ for children
-  **S**lap on a wide-brimmed hat
-  **S**eek shade - especially if outdoors between 11 am and 3 pm
-  **S**lide on sunglasses to protect your eyes

Be SunSmart



nccp

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For more information on being SunSmart visit www.hse.ie/sunsmart



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Here are some of the things NCCP are doing in response to your feedback:

You said:

“Include messages on ageing effects of the sun on skin”

“Promotion via social media (e.g., TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram)”

“Images that are clear and easy to understand”

“Free or low-cost sunscreen”

“Workshops with HSE NCCP in schools”

We did:

Created resources to include the effect of unprotected sun exposure on skin ageing. Resources were created in conjunction with young people.

SunSmart campaign 2022 used these social media platforms to promote the SunSmart messages.

Commissioned creation of images for SunSmart awareness campaign.

Piloting sunscreen dispensers in various locations.

Update of primary schools SunSmart lesson plans using consultation insights.

In the future we plan to use insights from young people to inform a NCCP and Healthy Ireland Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023+.