

Position Statement on Access to Sunscreen and Sun Protective Clothing in Schools and Summer Camps (Approved: Board of Directors - May 21, 2016; Revised: Board of Directors - November 18, 2023)

The American Academy of Dermatology Association (AADA) supports state-wide and school district-wide policies that allow students to use sunscreen and articles of sun protective clothing during the school day without physician authorization. The AADA also supports these same policies for summer youth camps.

The AADA is concerned about the increasing prevalence of skin cancer in young adults, which could stem from sunburn at an early age. Increasing intermittent sun exposure in childhood and during one's lifetime is associated with an increased risk of squamous cell carcinoma, basal cell carcinoma, and melanoma.^{1 2 3 4 5} Sunburns during childhood or adolescence can increase the odds of developing melanoma later in life,^{6 7} with 5 or more blistering sunburns in late adolescence increasing one's melanoma risk by 80% and nonmelanoma risk by 68%.⁵ Children with photosensitivity disorders are especially at risk for skin damage and injuries related to unprotected sun exposure.

Sunscreen is an over-the-counter drug. However, despite an excellent safety profile, sunscreen is not allowed in many schools without physician authorization. In these cases, sunscreen is usually required to be stored in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office. This presents many access issues due to the nurse's availability at the school, field trips off of school grounds, and limited amount of time available for outdoor activities.

Sunscreen is safe to use. Before an ingredient can be used in sunscreen, it must be approved

¹ Lin JS, Eder M, Weinmann S. Behavioral counseling to prevent skin cancer: a systematic review for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. *Ann Intern Med.* 2011 Feb 1;154(3):190-201. Review

² Stockfleth E, Revol O. Encouraging sun protection early in life: from a successful prevention programme in children to the identification of psychological barriers in adolescents. *J Eur Acad Dermatol Venereol.* 2022;36 Suppl 6:12-21. doi:10.1111/jdv.18194

³ Iannacone MR, Wang W, Stockwell HG, et al. Patterns and timing of sunlight exposure and risk of basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas of the skin--a case-control study. *BMC Cancer.* 2012;12:417. Published 2012 Sep 20. doi:10.1186/1471-2407-12-417

⁴ Lergenmuller S, Rueegg CS, Perrier F, et al. Lifetime Sunburn Trajectories and Associated Risks of Cutaneous Melanoma and Squamous Cell Carcinoma Among a Cohort of Norwegian Women. *JAMA Dermatol.* 2022;158(12):1367-1377. doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2022.4053

⁵ Wu S, Han J, Laden F, Qureshi AA. Long-term ultraviolet flux, other potential risk factors, and skin cancer risk: a cohort study. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev.* 2014;23(6):1080-1089. doi:10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-13-0821

⁶ Dennis, Leslie K. et al. "Sunburns and Risk of Cutaneous Melanoma, Does Age Matter: A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis." *Annals of epidemiology* 18.8 (2008): 614-627.

⁷ Watts CG, Drummond M, Goumas C, et al. Sunscreen Use and Melanoma Risk Among Young Australian Adults. *JAMA Dermatol.* 2018;154(9):1001-1009. doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2018.1774

Access to Sunscreen and Sun Protective Clothing in Schools and Summer Camps

Page 2 of 2

by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for this use. No peer-reviewed studies show that sunscreens that meet FDA standards are toxic to humans or hazardous to human health. Research shows that appropriate application of sunscreen can prevent sunburn and reduce the risk of skin cancer and premature aging.⁸

The AADA supports the American Medical Association's policy to exempt sunscreen from over-the-counter medication possession bans in schools and encourage all schools to allow students to bring and possess sunscreen at school without restriction and without requiring physician authorization.

Additionally, AADA recommends that schools and summer youth camps set a policy for the use of and access to sunscreen and articles of sun protective clothing, including caps, when outdoors. Students and campers should be given adequate time to apply sunscreen products and put on sun protective clothing before going outside. Schools that have prohibitions on certain types of clothing for dress code purposes should consider exemptions for non-descript shirts, sunglasses, caps, and hats with wide brims worn for sun protective measures. The AADA supports facilitating and reinforcing sun protective behaviors in students and campers to help protect them from sunburn and future skin cancer.

This Position Statement is provided for educational and informational purposes only. It is intended to offer physicians guiding principles and policies regarding the practice of dermatology. This Position Statement is not intended to establish a legal or medical standard of care. Physicians should use their personal and professional judgment in interpreting these guidelines and applying them to the particular circumstances of their individual practice arrangements.

⁸ Hughes MC, Williams GC, Baker P, Green AC; "Sunscreen and Prevention of Skin Aging, a Randomized Trial". Annals of Internal Medicine. 2013; 158(11):781-790.