Evidence-Based Sun Safety Programs: A Guide for Patients and Caregivers

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Sun safety is a vital component of skin cancer prevention. With over 3.5 million skin cancers diagnosed annually in the United States, protecting against harmful UV exposure is critical. Fortunately, evidence-based sun safety programs offer actionable, research-supported strategies to increase awareness and enhance sun protection behaviors across diverse populations and settings. Below, we discuss several programs targeting different populations. All links can be followed for further information and access to program materials.

Programs for Sun-Exposed Populations

These programs address the general need for sun safety among those frequently exposed to UV radiation.

- **1. Healthy Texts** (2015)
- Summary: This intervention uses a baseline survey to assess skin cancer risk factors, followed by customized text messages promoting sun protection and skin self-checks.
- **2.** Pool Cool (2002)
- Summary: This pool-based intervention combines education, interactive activities, and pool-wide environmental changes to promote sun safety.
- 3. Promoting Sun Safety Among Zoo Visitors (2001)
- Summary: This intervention encourages sun safety among zoo visitors with strategies like sun safety tip sheets for caregivers, activity sheets for children, coupons for hats and sunscreen, and sun safety reminder signs.

Programs for Children

These programs target children in educational settings, aiming to instill early habits.

- 1. Block the Sun, Not the Fun (1999)
- Summary: This intervention for child care centers offers sun protection workshops for staff and brochures with learning activities for parents and children.
- 2. Colorado Kids Sun Care Program (2012)
- Summary: This intervention includes mailed parent newsletters tailored to the child's skin cancer risk, child newsletters, and sun protection items like a sun shirt, hat, and sunscreen.
- 3. Kaiser Kids Sun Care Program (2006)
- Summary: This clinic-based intervention delivered at well-child visits for children aged 2–36
 months involves pediatricians advising parents on sun safety and providing informational
 packets with tips, activities, and promotional items.
- 4. The Raybusters Program: Early Interventions for Creating Sun Smart Behavior (2004)
- Summary: This intervention for mothers of children under age 2 includes a tailored phone counseling session with a health educator and two personalized newsletters on sun safety practices.
- 5. Together for Sun Safety (2000)
- Summary: This intervention for parents of elementary school-aged children provides mailed newsletters, brochures, and sun safety tip cards.
- 6. Skin Cancer Prevention: Useful Information for Parents from the Fields of Behavioral Science and Dermatology (2004)
- Summary: This intervention for young adolescents includes a handbook to help parents communicate with their children about skin cancer risk, harmful sun behaviors, and sun-safe practices.
- 7. Sun Protection for Early Childhood (2016)
- Summary: This intervention for children aged 2–6 includes a book on sun safety, a sunprotective swim shirt, and weekly electronic reminders encouraging sun protection.
- 8. Sun Protection for Florida's Children (2010)
- Summary: This school-based intervention for elementary students includes staff meetings, an educational brochure for parents, free hats for each student, seven classroom lessons, and a reminder newsletter for students and parents.
- **9.** Sun Safe (1998)
- Summary: This intervention for children aged 2–9 includes a grade-level curriculum for elementary schools and daycare centers, sun safety measures at town beaches (e.g.,

lifeguard training, UV index postings, free sunscreen), and primary care office systems promoting sun protection advice with educational materials.

10. SunSafe in the Middle School Years (2007)

 Summary: This intervention for middle school students features role modeling of sun-safe behaviors by teachers and peers, peer-led school activities, branded materials in the community, educational resources in primary care practices, and a device highlighting UV skin damage.

11. The E.P.A. SunWise Program (2002)

 Summary: This intervention for kindergarten through grade 8 students includes a 1-2 hour sun safety unit on UV radiation, risk factors for sun exposure, and sun-protective habits, along with supplemental activities and data to guide sun safety decisions in schools and communities.

Other Programs

These programs target more specific populations or professions.

- 1. Appearance-focused Skin Cancer Prevention Intervention (2008)
- Summary: This intervention aims to reduce indoor tanning among young women using a
 booklet and website that address tanning norms, explain UV and indoor tanning's harmful
 effects, and offer tanning alternatives.
- 2. Project SUNWISE: Skin Cancer Prevention Counseling by Pharmacists (1998)
- Summary: This intervention enhances pharmacists' ability to counsel patients on sun protection and skin cancer prevention through training videos, brochures, sunscreen samples for patients, and posters encouraging patient questions.
- 3. Sun Protection Strategies for Kidney Transplant Recipients (2014)
- Summary: This intervention for kidney transplant recipients, at higher skin cancer risk due to immunosuppressive drugs, includes an workbook and electronic reminders promoting sun safety.
- 4. Sun Safety Among U.S. Postal Service Letter Carriers ("Project SUNWISE") (2007)
- Summary: This intervention for postal service letter carriers involves health educators
 distributing sunscreen, hats, and materials, installing refillable sunscreen pumps, and giving
 presentations to encourage sun safety practices.