

# NEWS RELEASE

## Sunscreens Remain an Important Tool in Skin Cancer Prevention

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ottawa, Ontario, February 18, 1998** - Ottawa, Ontario--Canadians should **not** abandon their broad spectrum sunscreens as a result of recent reports arising from the annual meeting of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science. There is a large and growing body of evidence that modern sunscreens, which block **both** UV-A and UV-B radiation, can substantially reduce the harmful effects of the sun.

The best advice to Canadian consumers can be found in a statement recently approved by Health Canada, which has begun to appear on the labels of sunscreen products which offer SPF-15 or greater protection against both UV-A and UV-B radiation:

**"The sun may cause sunburn, premature aging of the skin and skin cancer. Avoiding the sun, wearing protective clothing and regular use of sunscreens over the years may reduce the chance of these harmful effects."**

The Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association of Canada worked closely with Health Canada and the dermatological community in the development of this statement, in order to ensure that consumers are well informed about the role of broad spectrum sunscreens in the maintenance of good health.

"Consumers should check product labels for this statement or ask their pharmacist to recommend a sunscreen product which protects against both UV-A and UV-B radiation, in order to be assured of the maximum available protection," says Gerry Harrington of the Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association of Canada.

While many studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of sunscreens in reducing the incidence of various types of skin cancers, the epidemiological reports out of the A.A.A.S. Annual Meeting cast doubt on their usefulness in preventing melanoma. Melanomas generally take from ten to twenty years to develop. As there were few, if any, broad spectrum sunscreens (protecting against both UV-A and UV-B) widely available ten years ago, this type of study is of limited usefulness in measuring the effectiveness of the products available today. While there is now clear scientific evidence of the risk reduction benefits of broad spectrum sunscreens and other strategies to reduce the harmful effects of the sun's rays, the **epidemiological** evidence will develop with the passage of time.

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