



## **Save Your Skin Foundation Tackles Rising Skin Cancer Rates with Youth-Focused Prevention Campaigns**

### **Initiatives include Youth Sun Safety Ambassadors, Free Public Sunscreen Dispensers, and Provincial Proclamations during Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month**

**May 1, 2025 - VANCOUVER, BC** - May is Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month. It is imperative that Canadians be reminded of the importance of sun safety as summer approaches. As skin cancer rates in Canada continue to rise, [Save Your Skin Foundation \(SYSF\)](#) is targeting youth with several prevention-focused awareness initiatives this spring including youth sun safety ambassadors, free public sunscreen dispensers, and municipal and provincial proclamations.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Canada, and cases are increasing. Melanoma, the deadliest form, is one of the top cancers in youth and young adults, with 11,300 cases diagnosed in 2024 and over 1,300 lives lost.<sup>1</sup> That's a 16% increase in just one year.<sup>2</sup> Preventing it early is key.

Canada is facing a shortage of family doctors and dermatologists, which means longer wait times for diagnosis and treatment and delayed care, which can lead to worse outcomes. Prevention becomes crucial when early diagnosis is harder to access.

Youth are at a formative stage where habits can last a lifetime. If sun safety is practiced early, it significantly reduces the cumulative UV exposure that leads to skin cancer later in life. Youth are often active outdoors during peak UV times - at summer camps, playing sports, or just hanging out. This increases the risk of sunburns, which are a major risk factor for skin cancer. It's much easier and more cost-effective to prevent skin damage than to treat it.

#### **Youth Sun Safety Ambassador**

With the help of Canadian rugby player Shalaya Valenzuela, SYSF is reaching out to thousands of young people across Canada, asking them to take action by wearing sunscreen, seeking shade, and checking their skin.

“As a professional rugby player, I spend a lot of time outdoors so I always take steps to protect my skin,” says Shalaya Valenzuela, Olympic medalist for Team Canada. “Even in Canada, the sun’s no joke. Just a small amount of exposure can damage your skin and lead to skin cancer, which can be deadly. Sun safety isn’t just about avoiding burns — it’s about protecting our health for the long run, on and off the field.”

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Cancer Statistics Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Canadian Cancer Society, Statistics Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Canadian Cancer Statistics: A 2024 special report on the economic impact of cancer in Canada. Toronto, ON: Canadian Cancer Society; 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Cancer Statistics Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Canadian Cancer Society, Statistics Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Canadian Cancer Statistics 2023. Toronto, ON: Canadian Cancer Society; 2023.

### **Sunscreen Dispensers**

Since 2022, SYSF's dispensers have been providing free, high-quality sunscreen at parks, beaches and underserved communities across Canada. This year, SYSF is installing 15 new dispensers, making a total of 75 dispensers across 8 provinces. As dispensers are made available to the public, locations will be listed [here](#) and can be found on the SunnyBuddy app.

### **Proclamations**

SYSF's proclamation initiative invites Canadian provinces and municipalities to take a stance against skin cancer and educate their communities on sun safety through mayoral proclamations. Last year, 50 cities and 6 provinces answered the call to proclaim May Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month, with 2025 set to bring even more. Look for your city [here](#).

### **Sun Safety Tips**

Applying sunscreen is part of an overall sun-safe way to enjoy the outdoors. First, limit your time in the direct sunlight, especially between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., seek shade, cover up by wearing long sleeves and pants and a wide-brimmed hat. Use sunscreen, specifically one labeled broad-spectrum, SPF 30, protect the lips with lip sunscreen or zinc oxide. Apply 20 minutes before sun exposure, and reapply every two hours or after swimming. Check out Save Your Skin's [Skin Cancer Prevention Tips](#).

### **About Save Your Skin Foundation**

Save Your Skin Foundation (SYSF) is a patient-led not-for-profit organization dedicated to the fight against non-melanoma skin cancers, melanoma, and ocular melanoma through education, advocacy, and awareness initiatives across Canada. SYSF provides a community of oncology patient and caregiver support throughout the entire continuum of care, from prevention and diagnosis to survivorship. Please visit [saveyourskin.ca](http://saveyourskin.ca) for more information.

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Media contact:

Amy Rosvold

Save Your Skin Foundation

778-317-1485

[amy@saveyourskin.ca](mailto:amy@saveyourskin.ca)