



AAP News Room



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Below are releases on studies appearing in the March issue of *Pediatrics*, the peer-reviewed, scientific journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

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AAP RECOMMENDATIONS ON LIMITING SUN EXPOSURE IN CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT SALON TANNING BY MINORS

Numerous public health campaigns encourage people to protect themselves from the risk of developing skin cancer, but people of all ages continue to overexpose themselves to harmful ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun. Teenagers and young adults are also exposed to UVR in tanning salons. Rates of skin cancer – including melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer – continue to rise, even in young people. A new American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) policy statement and corresponding technical report, “Ultraviolet Radiation: a Hazard to Children and Adolescents,” published in the March 2011 print issue of *Pediatrics* (published online Feb. 28), offer guidance to parents and pediatricians on skin cancer prevention and safe sun exposure practices. Lifelong sun protection is recommended starting at an early age. Education about UVR exposure is important for all children, especially those at high risk for developing skin cancer: children with light skin and eyes, who freckle or sunburn easily, or have a family history of melanoma. Pediatricians should advise children, parents and teens about the dangers of UVR exposure. Recommendations include wearing proper clothing and hats, timing outdoor activities to minimize peak midday sun (10 am-4 pm) when possible, applying sunscreen, and wearing sunglasses. Infants younger than 6 months should be kept out of direct sunlight and protected with clothing and hats. The use of tanning salons is a common practice among teenagers, especially

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females. In a national survey, 24 percent of non-Hispanic white teenagers 13 to 19 years of age used a tanning facility at least once. The intensity of UVR radiation produced by some tanning units can be 10 to 15 times higher than the midday sun. Along with the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Dermatology, the AAP supports legislation prohibiting access to tanning salons or use of artificial tanning devices by children under the age of 18.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.