

Sunscreen use and individual reactions: a message from Cancer Council Australia

CEO of Cancer Council Australia, Professor Sanchia Aranda, said today that reported reactions to its SPF 50+ Kids sunscreen were being investigated and that Cancer Council's sunscreen range remained safe and effective for the vast majority of users.

Professor Aranda thanked the people who reported reactions and urged anyone with concerns to phone the sunscreen infoline on 1300 364 515 for assistance. Cancer Council is working with two individuals who reported concerns to determine the specific cause of their reactions.

"We know sunscreen use prevents thousands of skin cancers in Australia each year," Professor Aranda said. "In some cases, sunscreen can also cause a reaction, depending on a range of factors. It's important that people affected are supported and that ongoing monitoring of sunscreens is in place to maximise benefits and minimise any concerns. Our sunscreen infoline staff will be able to help respond to individual questions and reactions."

Professor Aranda said most people could use sunscreens without an adverse reaction.

"If you are concerned that you might have a reaction to a new sunscreen, apply some to a small area of skin on the inside of your forearm. If the skin does not react adversely, you should be able to use the sunscreen as directed without concern. This should be adequate assurance in most situations."

Professor Aranda said Cancer Council sunscreens were closely regulated by the Australian Government's Therapeutic Goods Administration to help ensure they met the highest standards of safety and effectiveness.

"For an added assurance following recent concerns raised by users of our products, we are undertaking random additional testing of the Kids 50+ sunscreen currently in stores. This is beyond what is required by the TGA, but we want to give the community the greatest possible assurance that the product will help protect them from skin cancer, with minimal risk of any adverse reactions."

Professor Aranda said sunscreen use was an important form of sun protection, along with protective clothing, hats, and sunglasses and, whenever possible, avoiding the sun during peak UV periods.

A study published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*¹ estimated that, in 2010, average sunscreen use over previous decades in Australia had prevented 1,730 cases of melanoma and 14,190 squamous cell carcinomas.

"Given the lifesaving benefits of sunscreen, we will continue to encourage its use while ensuring that any individual concerns about sunscreen use are promptly investigated."

¹ Olsen C, Wilson F, Green A et al. Cancers in Australia attributable to exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation and prevented by regular sunscreen use, ANZ Journal of Public Health, Oct 2015.