



News Release

Melanoma is on the rise in Canada but there are ways to take action this summer

New Campaign Offers Canadians Resources to **Practice Skintimacy™**

KIRKLAND, QC, June 19, 2023/CNW/ – As we enter the summer months, which is often a time when sun safety and healthy skin habits are top of mind, Merck Canada is launching a melanoma awareness campaign. Centered around education, the campaign aims to inform Canadians about some of the signs of melanoma and how to spot them.

Although less common than other types, melanoma is a dangerous form of skin cancer because it has the potential to spread to other parts of the body.¹ However, when caught early, cure rates can reach more than 90 per cent.² The reality is that melanoma can affect everybody and may appear on parts of the body that are difficult to see on ourselves, making self-examinations challenging. In fact, findings suggest that loved ones play an important role in early detection.^{2,3}

The campaign encourages Canadians to **Practice Skintimacy™**, which means getting up-close-and-personal with their skin, and having family and friends take part in this important exercise. With the additional set of eyes, especially for those hard-to-see-places, Canadians may have a greater chance of finding something of concern and bringing it to the attention of a healthcare professional.

“The incidence of melanoma is on the rise, not only in Canada, but around the world,³” said Dr. Maxwell Sauder, Onco-dermatologist, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. “It’s critical that Canadians understand the seriousness of this disease and that early detection is one of our best strategies. By empowering Canadians with resources to engage in minimizing modifiable risk factors coupled with early detection, I hope to see more people proactively checking their skin and approaching those close to them about this important topic.”

Equipping Canadians with Information and Resources

Canadians can visit practiceskintimacy.ca for information to help them perform regular skin checks, including a simple list of tools that they can find at home—such as a ruler to measure the size of moles, a mirror to access those hard-to-see-places and a comb to get a good look at the scalp. By knowing what to look for and having some guidance to do it, we hope to encourage Canadians to perform regular skin checks and talk to loved ones about this growing disease.

“Melanoma can be a difficult experience for Canadians and their families, especially for those who are diagnosed at a late stage,” said Andre Galarneau, Executive Director & Vice President, Oncology Business Unit at Merck Canada. “As an organization who is dedicated to improving the lives of patients, we understand the critical importance of early detection when it comes to cancer, and melanoma is no different. Through this campaign, and with the support of patient advocacy groups, we not only want to educate Canadians about the related risks and warning signs of melanoma, but also inspire them to engage in prevention.”

Why we Should *Practice Skintimacy*[™] with Loved Ones

Melanoma can develop anywhere on the body but it most often develops on areas that are exposed to the sun which include the head, neck, back and legs – places where our partners and loved may be paying close attention.^{1,3}

As loved ones can help to spot something concerning, Canadians are encouraged to **Practice Skintimacy**[™], together! Getting familiar with one's skin is the ultimate act of self-love; and when you involve a partner, family member or friend, it's a great way to support the health of those close to you while also caring for yourself.

Melanoma can have serious consequences if it progresses, which supports the movement towards early detection.² Leading Canadian cancer organizations including the Canadian Cancer Society, The Save Your Skin Foundation, and Melanoma Canada, recommend conducting skin checks to help detect early changes to your skin.^{4,5,7} Other important things to pay close attention to are the size, shape and colour of moles, which are referred to the ABCDE's of melanoma.⁶

"Melanoma is one of few cancers that is visible,⁶ which means more can be done to spot it and treat it early," said Falyn Katz, CEO at Melanoma Canada. "We're proud to support the **Practice Skintimacy**[™] campaign, encouraging Canadians with education and resources to help them self-screen with their loved ones."

"With the summer months ahead, we know that Canadians will be spending more time outdoors, making it especially important for them to practice sun safety and conduct regular skin checks, said Kathy Barnard, Founder and President at Save Your Skin Foundation. "We hope that this campaign will help empower Canadians to engage in healthy skin habits and speak to their doctors if they see something concerning."

Canadians are encouraged to visit practiceskintimacy.ca where they can learn more about melanoma, connect to patient communities, and access resources to help them **Practice Skintimacy**[™] at home.

About Merck

At Merck, known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, we are unified around our purpose: We use the power of leading-edge science to save and improve lives around the world. For more than 130 years, we have brought hope to humanity through the development of important medicines and vaccines. We aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world – and today, we are at the forefront of research to deliver innovative health solutions that advance the prevention and treatment of diseases in people and animals. We foster a diverse and inclusive global workforce and operate responsibly every day to enable a safe, sustainable and healthy future for all people and communities. For more information about our operations in Canada, visit www.merck.ca and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#) @MerckCanada.

Merck's Commitment to Oncology

To help achieve a world where patients no longer fear a cancer diagnosis, Merck works to deliver innovative solutions that improve lives and contribute to making more tomorrows

possible. From the latest advancements in immuno-oncology to our pipeline of innovative medicines, we are working every day to help transform the way cancer is treated and ensure these solutions are accessible to the patients who need them most. Knowing this goes beyond medicine, we work with the entire oncology community to address barriers along the patient journey and discover how the different touchpoints intersect with the needs and lifestyles of patients. We approach our work from a holistic standpoint – one that goes beyond treatment and uses our collective passion and expertise to help improve the lives of Canadians.

CA-NON-02633

References

¹ American Cancer Society. What is melanoma skin cancer? Available at: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/melanoma-skin-cancer/about/what-is-melanoma.html>

² Canadian Dermatology Association. Melanoma. Available at: <https://dermatology.ca/public-patients/skin/melanoma/>

³ Mayo Clinic. Melanoma. Available at: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/melanoma/symptoms-causes/syc-20374884>

⁴ Canadian Cancer Society. Skin Exam. Available at: <https://cancer.ca/en/treatments/tests-and-procedures/skin-exam>.

⁵ Save Your Skin Foundation. Skin Check Guide. Available at: [Skin Check Guide - Save Your Skin Foundation](#)

⁶ How to Detect Melanoma. Available at: [Detect Melanoma, Learn how to spot melanoma ABCDEs \(melanomaneetwork.ca\)](#)