

Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt: Did the messages get through?

Background

Skin cancers are the most common form of cancer in New Zealand. Every year more than 60,000 people are diagnosed with skin cancer. Out of this number over 2,000 people are diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer, the most serious type. Approximately 300 people die from melanoma skin cancer each year. The good news is that skin cancer is largely preventable. The best ways people can reduce their risk of developing skin cancer include protecting the skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation from either the sun or sunbeds and by never getting sunburnt, especially under the age of 20 years.

In 2007/08, the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) launched the Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt campaign. The campaign targeted parents and caregivers and explained the link between sunburn and melanoma, with the overall aim of reducing sunburn among children. In March 2010, the HSC evaluated the effectiveness of its three-year campaign for New Zealand adults. A key measure was of awareness of the campaign and its messages.

Overview of key findings

- Nearly half (48%) of respondents could describe an advertisement about sun safety that they had seen in the last three months.

- The most commonly described advertisement, by over one in three (37%) of those respondents who could recall one, was Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt.
- Over three out of four (76%) respondents could recall seeing the Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt advertisement when prompted with a description.
- The most common messages taken from the advertising related to the need to protect oneself or one's child from the sun and the potential for sunburn at a young age to lead to cancer or problems later in life.

Research Details

Methodology

All respondents were asked whether they had seen television advertising about safety in the sun. Those who said they did recall advertising were asked to describe what they had seen or heard.

Respondents were prompted with a description of the Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt advertisement and asked whether they remembered having seen it. Those respondents who had seen the advertisement were asked what they thought it was telling them.



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All the open-ended responses were recorded verbatim. Each recurring point or theme was then identified, with all answers falling sufficiently close to that point or theme being grouped together as a response code.

Detailed Findings

Unprompted recall of sun safety advertising

All 603 respondents were asked whether they had seen any television advertising in the last three months (the 2009/10 summer period) about safety in the sun.

- Nearly half (48%) of respondents recalled seeing advertising about safety in the sun. Nearly half (48%) did not recall advertising and 5% did not know.
- Respondents more likely to recall advertising included those aged 18-34 years (56%) and those with fair or very fair skin (56%).

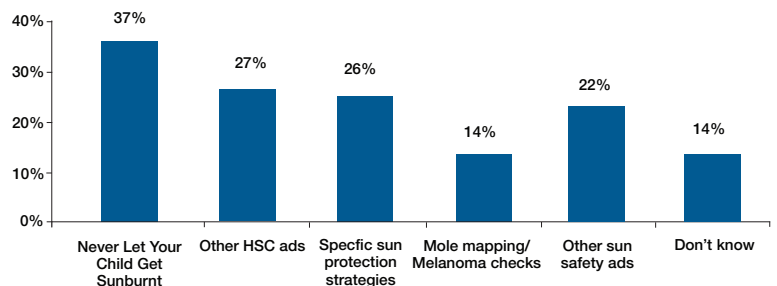
All respondents who recalled television advertising about sun safety were asked to describe what they had seen or heard.

- The most commonly described advertisement was Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt, by over one in

three (37%) respondents. Respondents aged 18-34 were more likely to recall this advertisement (52%).

- The next most commonly described groups of advertisements were other HSC advertising including 'Slip Slop Slap' and 'Tiger the Prawn' (27%) and those recommending or advertising specific sun protection strategies such as sunscreen, hats, sunglasses and covering up (26%).

Figure 1: Descriptions of sun safety ads recalled



Prompted recall of Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt advertisement

All respondents were read out the following description of an advertisement, and asked whether they recalled it. '[The ad] shows three children, a young boy with his surfboard, putting on a t-shirt, a young boy in the shower, and a young girl buttoning up her shirt. Each of them are

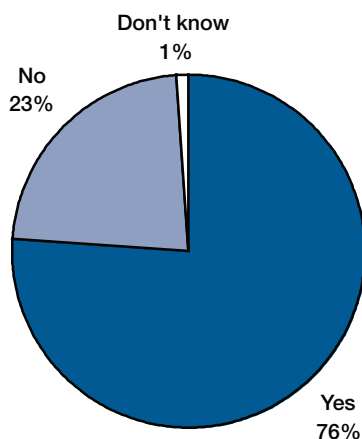


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in pain as they do so. We see close ups that each of them are red and sunburnt. Finally we see a woman in hospital. She is also in pain.'

- Over three in four (76%) respondents recalled seeing the advertisement, while 23% did not and 1% did not know.
- Those more likely to recall the advertisement included respondents aged 18-34 years (82%) and those with fair or very fair skin (84%).

Figure 2: Prompted recall of Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt advertisement



Message uptake from Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt advertisement

All respondents who recalled the Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt advertisement were asked what they thought it was trying to tell them. Respondents could provide more than one answer to this question. The responses presented below are therefore not mutually exclusive. Respondents took a range of messages from the advertisement. The top mentioned messages could be grouped into the following categories:

- **Danger that sun exposure can cause future health problems**, including 'sunburn (14%) or childhood sunburn (21%) could lead to problems later in life/skin cancer/melanoma', 'protect yourself (18%) or your children (13%) so you/they don't get problems later in life/skin cancer/melanoma' and 'sun is dangerous/damages skin' (8%).
- **Protect children from the sun**, including 'don't let your children get sunburnt' (16%), 'children/children's skin should be protected in the sun' (10%), 'take care of your children in the sun' (8%) and 'children should wear sunscreen' (7%).
- **General sun protection messages**, including 'wear sunscreen' (28%), 'don't get sunburnt' (16%), 'cover up' (14%) and 'be sun smart/sun safe/take care in the sun' (13%).



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About the Survey

- The Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt post-campaign survey was a nationwide telephone survey conducted in March 2010 with a sample of 603 adults aged 18-64 years, of whom 254 were parents or caregivers of children aged 16 years or under. The response rate for the survey was 52%.
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.

The HSC is a crown entity that uses health promotion initiatives to promote health and encourage healthy lifestyles, with a long-term focus on reducing the social, financial and health costs of a number of health behaviours.

Citation

Gray, R. (2010). *Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt: Did the messages get through?* [In Fact]. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council.

