

Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt: Did the messages lead to behaviour change?

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. Those who had seen the advertisement were asked about its effect on their sun protection behaviour for themselves and, in the case of parents and caregivers (who made up 42% of the sample), for their children.

Overview of key findings

- Regarding their own sun protection, nearly half (47%) of the respondents felt that they could do more to protect themselves after seeing the advertisement. One-quarter (25%) changed their own sun protection behaviour.
- While the majority of the parents and caregivers (68%) felt they were already doing enough to protect their children from the sun, almost as many (63%) said that seeing the advertisement had reinforced what they were already doing.
- Around three in 10 (31%) parents and caregivers felt, after viewing the ad, that they could be doing more to protect their child from the sun. The same proportion had gone on to make changes to the way they protected their child in the sun.
- Most respondents (88%) found the advertisement's messages useful as a reminder, regardless of how much they already knew about sun protection.



Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt: Did the messages lead to behaviour change? (continued)

Research Details

Methodology

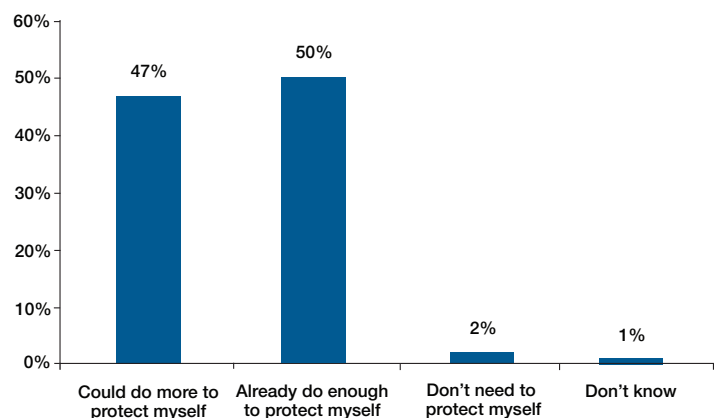
All respondents who had seen the Never Let Your Child Get Sunburnt advertisement (n=465) were asked about their attitudes towards their own sun protection and whether their behaviour had changed since seeing the advertisement. They were also asked to reflect on how useful the advertisement was as a reminder, given what they already knew about sun safety. Parents and caregivers (of 0 to 16-year-olds) who had seen the advertisement (n=202) were also asked about their attitudes towards their children's sun protection and whether, as a consequence, they had changed their children's sun protection. Respondents were provided with short lists of responses to choose from.

Detailed Findings

Own sun protection

- Nearly half (47%) of respondents said that, having seen the advertisement, they thought they could do more to protect themselves from the sun. Half (50%) of the respondents said that they thought they already did enough to protect themselves, while 2% said they didn't need to protect themselves and 1% didn't know.

Figure 1: Please think about how you protect yourself from the sun. Having seen this advertisement, do you think...

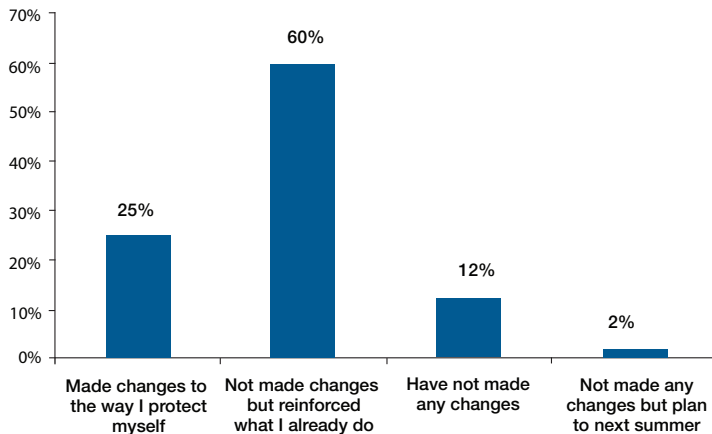


- Over half (60%) of respondents said that having seen the advertisement, 'I have not made changes, but the ad has reinforced what I already do'.
- One in four (25%) respondents said that having seen the advertisement 'I have made changes to the way I protect myself'. Parents and caregivers were more likely than non-parents or caregivers (35% compared with 19%) to say this.
- Twelve percent of respondents had not made any changes and 2% said 'I have not made any changes, but I plan to next summer'.



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Figure 2: Having seen this advertisement, which of these answers best describes what you have done to protect yourself from the sun?



- Over three in ten (31%) parents and caregivers said that they had made changes to the way they protected their children from the sun while over six in ten (63%) said they had not made changes, but the ad had reinforced what they already did. Three percent had not made any changes and 2% said they had not made any changes but planned to next summer.

Children's sun protection

- Over three in ten (31%) of the parents and caregivers who had seen the advertisement said that they thought they could do more to protect their children from the sun. Nearly seven in ten (68%) felt that they already did enough, while 1% said they didn't need to protect their children from the sun.

Figure 3: Please think about how you protect the children you care for from the sun. Having seen this advertisement, do you think...

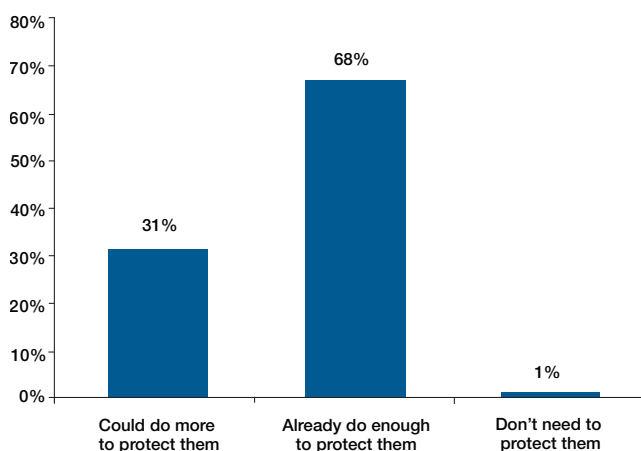
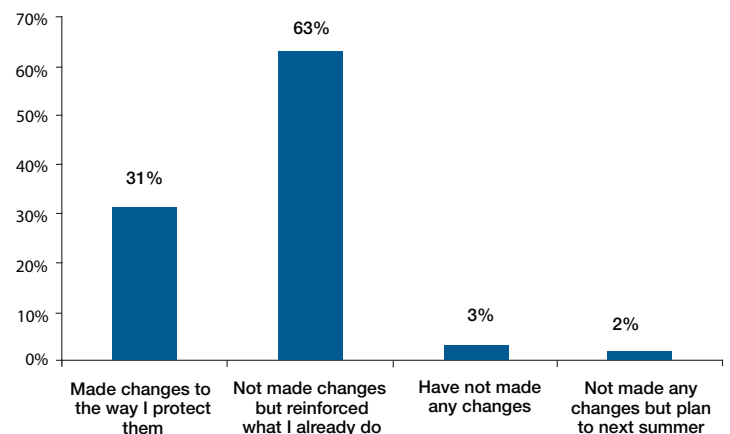


Figure 4: Having seen this advertisement, which of these answers best describes what you have done to protect the children you care for from the sun?



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The advertisement as a reminder

- All respondents who had seen the advertisement were asked 'Given what you already know about sun safety, how useful was the advertisement to you as a reminder? Would you say very useful, fairly useful or not at all useful?'
- Nearly nine in 10 (88%) respondents said that they found the advertisement useful, including 45% who said the advertisement was very useful. Over one in 10 (12%) respondents found the advertisement not at all useful.

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 lead to behaviour change?* [In Fact]. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council.

