

News From...



The Australasian College of Dermatologists

Skin Cancer, it has no age limitations.

Australia's leading professional organisation for the diagnosis and treatment of all skin diseases, the Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD), is pleading for Australians to recognise that the deadly indiscriminate nature of skin cancer has no age limitations nor is it selective.

Lachlan Henry, a 17year old Queenslander, is a prime example of an age group not usually associated with skin cancer.

Lachlan had a potentially deadly melanoma removed from the skin of his right upper chest. A lymph gland biopsy was diagnosed positive which lead to the rest of Lachlan's glands being removed from his upper right chest. Lachlan was still at school at the time.

Fortunately for Lachlan, continued diagnosis has proved negative and has been closely monitored by his dermatologists and his melanoma surgeon. Lachlan has remained well since and has recently married. He now ensures that he has regular checks for skin cancers and approaches the practice of sun safety with renewed care and extra vigilance.

Australians have the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Each year more than 1300 Australians die from this almost totally preventable disease. Fortunately, individual actions to reduce the risk of developing skin cancer are simple and effective.

"Lachlan Henry's case is the perfect example of why we need to continue targeting younger people with our skin cancer messages," says Dr Stephen Shumack of the Australasian College of Dermatologists.

"Early detection of skin cancer, and associated preventative steps, will save many lives in the future but these messages need to be conveyed, urgently to our youth and starting as young as possible."

"Young people, in particular young men must reduce their UV radiation exposure by choosing to avoid outdoor activity during peak UV periods or using clothing, hats and sunscreen when outdoors. The target group is aged 17 to 29 years of age, if not younger."

In 2005 almost 300,000 Australians will visit a General Practitioner or, Specialist Dermatologist to have a skin cancer (or cancers) removed and, unfortunately, over 1300 of the die from the disease.

It is also estimated that almost two thirds of Australians will contract skin cancer sometime during their lives, with the diseases origins stemming from sun exposure, more often than not at the beach.

"The "it can't happen to me" attitude is rapidly and statically shifting to, "it did happen to me"," says Dr Shumack .

For further information on sun protection and the risks of skin cancer visit
www.dermcoll.asn.au

MEDIA INQUIRIES

Dr Stephen Shumack
Honorary Secretary
The Australasian College of Dermatologists
(02) 9879 6177

or

Anna Wallin
S2i Communications
(0408) 632 657