

December 2015

Dear Friend,

**Skin cancer is preventable!** This knowledge is fairly widespread, and yet so many people ignore the facts and continue to demonstrate risky behaviours and tempt fate.

When I was diagnosed, I was fortunate – Stage 0 (in situ) malignant melanoma and relatively easily treated. But still, I spent a terrifying four weeks in labs and doctors' offices getting tests done to make sure my cancer hadn't metastasized (spread beyond the primary lesion on the back of my arm). In my mind, while driving home from that initial doctor's appointment, I was actually planning my funeral. Silly, I know, but hearing the dreaded "C" word...

It all turned out well in the end. I had the lesion surgically removed and now I am checked every six months by a dermatologist. And, of course, I check myself regularly looking for new or changing moles – over my whole body (yes, even where the sun doesn't shine☺). Now, more than ever, I am so careful about being in the sun – avoiding it when I can, and when not: wide-brimmed hats, long sleeves and pants and plenty of sunscreen applied every two hours. And of course, never going anywhere near a tanning bed!

Now that I have been one of the lucky ones, with an early diagnosis and successful treatment, I have become passionate about teaching others and creating awareness around sun safety, early detection and the risks associated with the use of tanning beds.

Not that I was ever a tanner, but I am fair skinned, blue eyed and blonde. And yes, I have multiple moles – so I am at high risk, meaning that just the little bit of sun and the few accidental burns I got as a young person were enough.

**The facts are:**

- **One in six Canadians born in the 1990s will be diagnosed with skin cancer**
- **Skin cancer represents 1/3 of all new cancers diagnosed in Canada – that is more than 85,000 individuals each year (more than lung, breast, prostate and colorectal cancers combined).**
- **Over 1,600 of those people die each year - from a disease that is preventable!**

...over

That is why I support the Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation. I volunteer my time to make presentations at schools, day cares (they actually “get it” better than most), seniors groups (it’s never too late, and early detection is critical) and in front of outdoor workers.

Skin cancer is caused by over exposure to UV radiation. That means if we protect ourselves, we can prevent skin cancer. Wearing wide brimmed hats along with long sleeves and pants, staying in the shade during the hottest part of the day and properly applying sun screen are all within our individual control and will prevent skin cancer.

Avoiding tanning beds is also critical. Did you know that **using a tanning bed even once before the age of 35 increases your risk of skin cancer by 57%**? And every subsequent use increases that risk even more!

Early detection, as in my case, is equally important. Most skin cancers, if diagnosed early, are treatable with a minimum of risk. Get to know your skin by checking it regularly (at least once per month) and noticing any changes. You can sign up for the Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation’s monthly skin check reminders at [www.igosafe.ca](http://www.igosafe.ca).

**More facts:**

- **Skin cancer is the number one cancer killer of women aged 25 to 30.**
- **Skin cancer is the second most common cancer in young adults aged 15 to 34.**

And while it is almost entirely preventable, neither the tragic statistics nor awareness and education around prevention and early detection have penetrated the public consciousness. We need to change behaviours and shift attitudes – that “healthy glow” we once coveted is nothing but damaged skin – skin that will look old and wrinkly before its time and be at much higher risk of turning on us and becoming a deadly cancer.

Join me in supporting the important work of the Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation. In-school presentations, public service announcements, social media campaigns, workplace safety programs and physician education are all programs that will create awareness and educate Canadians about skin cancer prevention and early detection.

Your support will make that happen – and when it does, Canadians will learn more about sun safety and how they can prevent skin cancer, for themselves and their loved ones, saving not only lives, but also the anxiety that comes from hearing the word “cancer.”

I support the Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation and invite you to do the same.

Together we can reduce the occurrence of this preventable disease. Please join me today and give generously.

Sincerely,

*Shari Paziuk*

Shari Paziuk

**P. S. Changing behaviours saves lives! Join me today in educating and creating awareness in order to reduce the occurrence of skin cancer. Complete the enclosed response card and mail in your donation or go online to [www.IGoSafe.ca](http://www.IGoSafe.ca) and click on the “[Donate Now](#)” button.**

*By supporting the education and awareness programs of the Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation we will reduce the occurrence of skin cancer and save lives!*