

# Health Trends

## New Teen Survey Sheds Light On Boys-Will-Be-Boys Behavior

(NAPSA)—The old adage “boys will be boys” has been used to sum up the reckless way many boys view life—whether it’s racing dirt bikes without a helmet or spending hours on the beach without sunscreen.

A recent study by the American Academy of Dermatology found that teenage boys were the least likely to protect themselves from the sun. Fortunately, learning more about the dangers now may reduce their risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

“Teenagers don’t equate bad behavior in the present with bad things happening later,” said dermatologist Darrell S. Rigel, M.D., clinical professor, New York University Medical Center in New York City. “Skin cancer is no exception.”

The Academy study found that older teen boys (aged 15 to 17) are the least careful when it comes to protecting their skin from sun exposure—only 32 percent reporting that they are very or somewhat careful.

This may explain findings from a previous study published in the January 2003 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*. The study concluded that the majority (44 percent) of people diagnosed with melanoma—the deadliest form of skin cancer—were white men over the age of 50.

“Invasive melanoma, the hardest type of skin cancer to treat, is the fifth most common cancer in men,” said Dr. Rigel. “While skin cancer can take years to develop, we need to convince teenage boys to change their behavior now and reverse this alarming trend.”

The survey also compared the sun protection attitudes of boys



**By not being careful about sun exposure now, many teenagers may be increasing their risk for skin cancer later.**

and girls. Older teenage boys were less vigilant than younger boys and girls of all ages. Both younger and older teen boys were less cautious in the sun than teenage girls. Fewer boys reported wearing protective clothing and seeking shade compared to girls, and only 33 percent of boys said that they apply sunscreen when going out in the sun vs. 53 percent of girls.

Among all teens, younger teens (age 12 to 14) tend to be more vigilant about protecting themselves from the sun.

“With younger teens, parents still have influence on their child’s behavior which makes them more likely to be smart in the sun,” added Dr. Rigel. “Older teens start exerting their independence and tend to ignore their parents’ advice. Skin cancer is preventable but until teens change their behavior, we’ll continue to see skin cancer rates rise.”

For more information, visit [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org) or contact the Academy toll-free at (888) 462-DERM (3376).