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News Release

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Subject: Sun Safety

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Licking County, OH – “During the summer months, people tend to think about sun protection only when they go to the pool or the beach, but they need to think about it every day”, says Licking County Health Commissioner, Joe Ebel. All people need to protect themselves from the sun’s rays on a daily basis. Research has shown that daily exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays can promote skin cancer.

The American Cancer Society’s awareness campaign for skin cancer prevention promotes the slogan “Slip! Slop! Slap! and Wrap” which is a catch phrase that reminds people of the 4 key ways they can protect themselves from UV radiation:

- Slip on a shirt,
- Slop on sunscreen,
- Slap on a hat, and
- Wrap on sunglasses to protect the eyes and sensitive skin around them from ultraviolet light.

In order to protect themselves, people should place sunscreen on all areas of exposed skin. Experts recommend selecting a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. The sunscreen should offer both “UVA” and “UVB” protection. When you apply sunscreen using an SPF 15 product, you get the equivalent of 1 minute of UV rays for every 15 minutes you spend in the sun. Wearing SPF sunscreen of 15 for one hour is the same as spending 4 minutes in the sun, totally unprotected. Sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before going out in the sun. Most sunscreens should be applied every two hours and immediately after swimming or sweating a great deal.

Wearing a hat also offers protection from the sun. A hat needs to have a two to three inch brim to protect the eyes, ears, forehead, nose and scalp. Simple baseball caps do not offer enough protection.

Sunglasses should be worn whenever people are out in the sunshine. Look for sunglasses with “ANSI” label. This means that the glasses will block at least 99% of UV rays. If the sunglasses do not have a label, do not assume that they provide proper protection. Spending a lot of time in the sun without eye protection increases one’s chances of developing eye problems.

Another way to limit exposure to the sun’s UV rays is to limit outdoor time when UV rays are most intense. This is usually between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00P.M. People should plan activities indoors during those hours.

For more information please visit: www.cancer.org or www.lickingcohealth.org.