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PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

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Protect the Skin Your Baby Is In-No Sun for Baby

TWIN FALLS- South Central Public Health District is promoting a program called “No Sun for Baby.” This program not only highlights the importance of sun protection for children of all ages, but also educates parents and caregivers not to use sunscreen on babies under the age of six months.

Exposure to the sun’s rays can hurt a baby’s skin. Too much sun early in life can lead to serious health problems later, including a skin cancer called melanoma. There are steps that parents and caregivers can take to ensure their baby’s skin “lasts a lifetime.” First of all, for children under the age of six months, sunscreen should not be used. Sunscreen can somewhat impair effective cooling by perspiration, and babies have a hard time staying cool. Infants proportionally have more skin for the size of their body as compared to adults. Sunscreens are made of chemicals, so the chemical exposure is relatively minimal for older children and adults compared to a baby. And lastly, most research has been done on children over six months of age, so the recommendations are for children six months and older.

After a baby is six months of age, sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or greater is recommended. Sunscreen should be applied 20 minutes before going outside and should be reapplied every two hours, or after swimming or sweating. Close attention should be paid to the face, neck, and ears which are often overlooked when lathering up.

Seek shade whenever possible and limit time in the sun. It’s especially important to limit time outside between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun’s rays are the strongest.

When outdoors, make sure your baby is covered up with a shirt and a wide brimmed hat that covers their ears.

Some other helpful sun protection tips include:

- Give your baby plenty of water to drink on hot days.
- Remember that reflective surfaces such as water, snow, concrete, and glass can make the sun's rays stronger and more harmful to your baby's skin.
- The sun's rays are still harmful on cloudy days.
- Although lighter skin is more susceptible to the sun's damaging rays, dark skin is still at risk for skin cancer.
- Be a role model! Be sure to properly protect yourself from the sun's rays!

Play it safe this summer and protect the skin your baby is in. For more information on the No Sun for Baby program, please call Susie Beem at South Central Public Health at 737-5946.

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