Six Facts on Skin Cancer

Odds of winning the lottery: 1 in 135,145,920 (multi-state, mega-millions jackpot)
Odds of dying from skin cancer 1 in 29,500 (Source: New York Times article by David Ropeik and Nigel Holmes, Aug. 9, 2003)

1. The number one cause of skin cancer is exposure to ultraviolet radiation produced by the sun or tanning lamps. Skin cancer is also the most common type of cancer diagnosed in the US.
2. Along with using an effective sunscreen, people who work outside should take these two precautions: wear wide-brimmed hats and cover as much skin as possible with long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
3. There are three main types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma.
4. The most deadly type of skin cancer is malignant melanoma, which accounts for about 1 in 20 (five percent) of skin cancers in Canada.
5. Damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays are strongest between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. People should not be in the sun without a powerful sunscreen during those hours.
6. Whether at work or play, people who are out in the sun need to apply sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 and reapply it periodically if they are sweating heavily or swimming. Note that many people use much stronger sunscreens than SPF 15.