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Tanning Bed Warning For Those Under 35

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Achieving that bronze glow for that first trip to the beach is an important goal for some, but sitting under a tanning lamp to get that look poses a greater skin cancer risk to particular people, according to recent research.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer says that anyone who sits under a sunlamp drastically increases their risk of the deadliest form of skin cancer, but the risk is especially high for those under 35.

"Sun tanning beds are basically UV light, and UV light promotes skin cancer," Toronto dermatologist Dr. Lisa Kellat said.

"I think the bottom line is that, if you have a tan you damage your skin ... there's no way around it."

But tanning salon operator Joey Kazutas disputes the researchers' findings and says a few rays aren't harmful.

"Like anything, it's something that you have to do in moderation and if you're in a controlled environment, it's very safe," the owner of the Sunsplash Tanning Salon said.

Young adults who lay in tanning beds boost their risk for melanoma by 75 percent, according to researchers, who reviewed all studies done up to March 2006 to investigate the relationship between sunlamps and the disease.

"The strength of the existing evidence suggests that policy makers should strongly consider enacting measures such as restricting minors and discouraging young adults from using indoor tanning equipment, in order to protect the general population from additional risk for melanoma and squamous cell skin cancer," the IARC said in its report, which was published in the March issue of the International Journal of Cancer.

The apparent risks haven't deterred some tanners like Kim Pillon, who goes for a biweekly tan before the summer starts.

"I try not to think about it, although it's in back of my head all the time, every day that I go for a tan," she said.

Achieving that golden bronze colour before you hit the beach for the first time is a goal for some sun worshippers, but it's important to realize the risks of sitting under a tanning lamp and exposing yourself to UVA and UVB rays.

Information courtesy of Health Canada.

Risks Associated With Tanning Lamps:

Sunburn: This inflammation is caused by over-exposure to UV radiation, particularly UVB rays.

Photokeratitis and Photoconjunctivitis: These are eye conditions that are caused by overexposure to UV radiation if you don't properly protect your peeps. Overexposure to UV rays has been linked to cataracts, which can lead to blindness.

Premature Aging: Overexposure to UV radiation can have longer-term health effects, including premature aging of the skin.

Skin Cancer/Weakening of the Immune System: Your risk of developing skin cancer increases with accumulated exposure to UV rays. According to Health Canada, there is also research that suggests that overexposure to this type of radiation can weaken the immune system.

Minimizing Your Risk Of Complications From Tanning Beds:

If you decide to go ahead, the following steps will help minimize your risk:

- Read the warning labels on the sunlamp or tanning bed you are using and follow the directions carefully.
- If you go to a tanning salon, discuss your skin's sensitivity and your ability to tan with the salon operator. This should help the operator recommend the amount of time for your tanning session and how frequently you should tan.
- Do not exceed the recommended time per tanning session for your skin type.
- Allow at least 48 hours between each tanning session. This will give your skin a chance to repair damage from the UV radiation and may slow down the aging effects caused by the exposure.
- Always wear the safety eyewear that is recommended for the type of lamp you are using.
- Be sure there is a physical barrier, such as a clear sheet of acrylic, between you and the tanning lamp. This will help prevent heat burns from the lamp.
- Report any adverse reaction, such as sunburn or itchiness, to the salon operator. In cases of severe sunburn, see your health care professional.
- Do not use tanning lamps more often than is necessary to maintain the colour of tan you want. Health Canada advises tanning lamp users to limit their total number of tanning sessions per year. Remember, the less ultraviolet radiation you get, the better it is for your health.

It's important to remember that people with fair skin or a history of sunburn are at a greater risk for adverse effects from tanning lamps.

For more information, visit Health Canada's website by [clicking here](#).

And to read the guidelines tanning salon operators must follow, [click here](#).