

FEBRUARY IS TANNING SAFETY MONTH

The time of year has come when you may be considering going to the tanning bed to get ready for spring break, prom, or an upcoming wedding or vacation. The Scott County Health Department wants you to be aware that indoor tanning has several health risks.

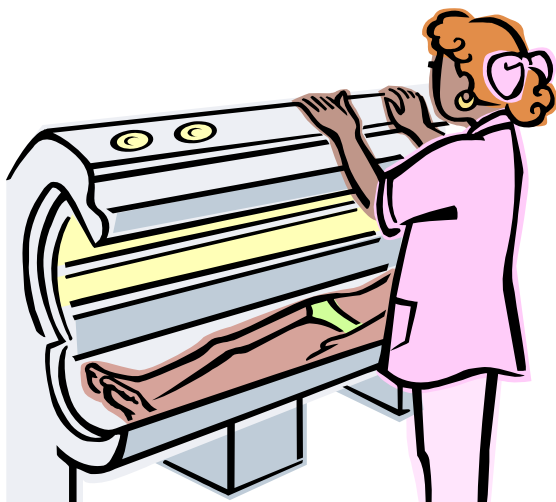


HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH TANNING BEDS

- * Increased risk of skin cancer
- * Increased risk of skin thickening, age spots, and premature aging
- * Possibility of burning or rash
- * Increased risk of eye damage unless proper eyewear is worn

“The World Health Organization, the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Dermatology have labeled tanning beds as the health-peril equivalent of cigarettes. All have urged prohibiting their use by minors.”-NY TIMES

TANNING SYSTEMS



Most tanning salons offer low and high-pressure tanning beds. If you are going to use indoor tanning, it is important to understand the difference between the two. Low-pressure systems use a higher percentage of Ultra-Violet Type B rays which only penetrate the top layers of skin but can cause burning more easily than high-pressure systems. High-pressure systems require shorter and less frequent sessions compared to low-pressure beds. High-pressure beds also use more Ultra-Violet Type A rays which penetrate deeper than Ultra-Violet Type B rays increasing the risk of skin cancer.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT

Many people chose to use tanning beds because they believe they look healthier with a tan or to avoid burning on their spring break trip. Be aware that any exposure to Ultra-Violet light increases your risk of skin cancer and early aging. Also, there is no evidence that proves a "base-tan" will prevent burning or skin damage. In fact, any change of skin color is considered damaged skin. Everyone is at risk for skin damage no matter what skin tone. The FDA recognizes the following six categories:

Type	Sun History	Example
I	Always burns easily, never tans, extremely sun sensitive skin	Red-headed, freckles, Irish/Scots/Welsh
II	Always burns easily, tans minimally, very sun sensitive skin	Fair-skinned, fair-haired, blue or green-eyed, Caucasians
III	Sometimes burns, tans gradually to light brown, sun sensitive skin	Average skin
IV	Burns minimally, always tans to moderate brown, minimally sun sensitive	Mediterranean-type Caucasians
V	Rarely burns, tans well, sun insensitive skin	Middle Eastern, some Hispanics, some African-Americans
VI	Never burns, deeply pigmented, sun insensitive skin	African-Americans



ALTERNATIVES TO INDOOR TANNING

If you do not want to give up that sun-kissed look but are not willing to take the health risks associated with Ultra-Violet exposure consider using a sunless-tanning lotion or getting a spray tan.

RESOURCES:

Iowa Department of Public Health:

www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/tanning_facilities.asp

Mayo Clinic:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/medical-edge-newspaper-2005/sept-26.html>

New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com>

If you are looking for more information about sunless tanners visit:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sunless-tanning/SN00037>

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