

# The Darker Side of Indoor Tanning

## Thinking of getting an indoor tan?

Before you decide, consider the darker side. Indoor tanning may be just as harmful as outdoor tanning. The risks include:

- Skin cancer
- Premature skin aging
- Skin and eye burns
- Allergic-type reactions
- Cataracts (clouding in the eyes)
- Reduced immunity
- Blood vessel damage

## A "SAFE" UVA TAN?

Like the sun, sunlamps give off two types of radiation - UVA and UVB -and both types present risks.

Some tanning salon operators may claim that UVA sunlamps are safer than the sun and UVB lamps. This is not true.

UVA causes **premature aging of the skin**. Recent studies show that UVA radiation poses the risk of **skin cancer**, as does the faster burning UVB radiation.

**Remember:** Exposure to the UV radiation from sunlamps **adds** to the total amount of UV radiation you get from the sun *during your lifetime, increasing your risk of skin cancer.*

The eyes are also at risk. Exposure to UV radiation can damage the eye's cornea and retina and may, in some cases, lead to permanent loss of vision. The risk can be sharply lowered by wearing protective screening goggles, which absorb UV radiation.

## You Should Never Use Tanning Devices If:

- You sunburn easily and don't tan. If you don't tan in the sun, you probably won't tan with tanning devices.
- You get frequent cold sores. UV may cause them to appear more frequently.
- You have certain diseases, such as lupus erythematosus and vitiligo, which surface or worsen from exposure to UV radiation.
- You are taking certain medicines that can make you sunburn more easily.

If you take certain medicines and are exposed to UV radiation, especially UVA, you may have an allergic-type (photosensitive) reaction, including exaggerated skin burn, itching and scaling skin, rash, and swelling.

These medicines may include, but are not limited to, many antibiotics, some birth control pills, high blood pressure medications, antihistamines, tranquilizers, and diabetes medications.

If you are taking any medicines, check with your doctor or pharmacist before you tan.

## **It's Best Not To Tan, But.....**

If you choose to tan, in spite of the risks:

- Always use goggles that come with the tanning device. If you are in a commercial tanning salon, request them from the salon operator. Make sure they fit snugly around your eyes and are not cracked. Don't rely on closing your eyes, and don't substitute sunglasses or cotton wads.
- Learn your skin type and exposure limits as listed in the exposure directions.
- Be sure someone is nearby to help in an emergency.

## **Signs of Injury?**

- Seek immediate, professional medical attention for severe skin burns, eye burns, and allergic-type reactions.
- Report serious injuries to the manufacturer of the device and to the nearest Food and Drug Administration District Office.
- See a doctor if you see an unusual skin lesion or sore.

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