

NEWS

Leather face: The effects of too much tanning

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Reporter

When it comes to keeping up your tan during the winter months, many people chose to use indoor tanning beds.

Despite the many serious warnings by the Ministry of Health, tanning salons are a \$5 billion dollar a year industry, and every year, the industry gets bigger. This may be partly because society has correlated tanned skin with health.

Society couldn't be more wrong. In reality, tanned skin means unhealthy skin.

Dr. James Spencer from the North American Dermatologist Association says young people are more vulnerable and may believe that it's safe.

"Research has shown that indoor tanning is dangerous, there should be laws to protect children."

Most salons in Charlottetown offer either stand up or lay down tanning beds. Generally, stand up beds are stronger, and you only need to tan a few minutes, usually six to eight minutes. With the lay down bed you can tan for up to twenty minutes.

Whether you chose to tan standing up or laying down, you are still equally at risk.

Here are some scary things you need to know before your next trip to the tanning salon. Tanning beds are so

powerful that they actually emit up to five times more ultraviolet radiation than Australia's midday sun. This means that it is much easier to burn in a tanning bed than it is to burn outside during the summer.

Also, being subjected to such high levels of ultraviolet radiation causes deep permanent wrinkles and premature aging that is especially visible around the face and neck. The radiation from a tanning bed is a carcinogen and actually breaks down the skin's defenses leaving much of the skin beyond repair. Not only is tanning bad for your skin, tanning regularly via indoor tanning beds can actually suppress your immune system, leaving you vulnerable to common cold and flu bugs.

You can also severely damage your cornea if you don't wear the recommended eye protection.

People who claim that indoor tanning gives them a boost of the much needed vitamin D are also misinformed. It is much safer to eat foods like salmon or dairy that contain vitamin D or take a daily supplement. Most women and men who use indoor tanning beds understand that they are at risk for developing various skin cancers. What they don't know is that they may be one of the 62,190 people who will be diagnosed with melanomas this year. Or possibly one of the seventeen people in Canada, who will die from Melanoma cancer each week.



Photo: Bethany Lassaline

Typical tanning bed

I'm sure you're thinking you don't tan often enough to become one of the statistics? You're probably wrong, because Canada's defines a 'regular tanner' as somebody who goes to a tanning bed ten times a year or more. That's less than one visit per month. Most tanners will admit that you can't even get, or keep a tan with such few visits.

Anybody who tans regularly has an 8-fold increased risk for developing dangerous melanoma cancer.

That's pretty scary considering most people who tan once to twice a week are accumulating around 100 visits to the tanning beds per year.

Here at UPEI, the health unit is prepared to offer aid to any student who feels they may have skin damage or irregular moles. Campus Doctors will meet with concerned students and refer them to one of the island's plastic surgeons to receive a diagnosis and follow up treatment.

Dermatologists are urging people to try alternatives to indoor tanning beds. There is a big push for young people to use self tanners to achieve their desired tan. Self-tanners are safe to use as they have been approved by the FDA, as they simply dye the top layer of the skin.

There are many products on the market and offer a wide variety of choice. The Shoppers Drug Mart, located on University Avenue has many various skin care lines that offer self-tanners, each ranging in price.

Cosmetician Sonja says, "The prestige lines like Lancôme and Clarins are the most effective. They are the least orangin."

Although these products do cost a bit more, they are the best option to get a natural looking tan. Self tanners can be found in various forms like lotions, creams, gels, milks, foams, mousse and towlettes.

"It really depends on what you are looking for, each line will have products that are specifically designed for different parts of the body," Sonja said. "There are some products that are specifically for the face, they will often say visage..."

If you want to use self tanner on a larger part of your body, like your legs, you may want to consider a foam or a mousse.

"The best way to apply self tanners to your face, is by using a foundation brush, this way you avoid stains on your nails or hands," Sonja said. "Exfoliate and moisturize before you apply the self tanner. This way you will get the best results."

Sonja recommends the liquid bronze self tanner from Clarin's Prestige Line. A 100 ml bottle is about \$35.00 plus taxes. A less expensive choice is the L'Oreal Sublime Bronze Self-Tanning Lotion that costs \$15.99 for 150 ml.

So the next time you head off to the tanning bed, you may want to think twice about what is at risk.



Photo: Bethany Lassaline

Sonja at Shoppers Drug Mart shows the different tanning products available