

9041 - Indoor Tanning: Friend or Foe?



UV rays from tanning beds have the same effects as UV from the sun! Long-term exposure to UV rays, and sunburns, either from the sun's rays or tanning beds, can put you at a greater risk of developing non-melanoma or melanoma skin cancers.

Who's at Risk? Never use a tanning bed if:

- You are under 18.
- You're fair skinned, have freckles or moles and burn easily.
- There's a family history of skin cancer.
- You're using medications that increase your sensitivity to UV.
- (Source: Canadian Cancer Society)



Common Tanning Myths

- **Tanning protects me from the sun:** Think again. You may think it is less harmful, but you are still exposed to UV radiation in the tanning bed and you are still changing the colour of your skin. Some tanning beds can expose you to five times as much radiation as the sun!
- **I'll get my vitamin D by going to the tanning salon:** You could but you don't need that much exposure to UV rays. Just a few minutes a day of unprotected sun exposure is usually all that is needed to get enough vitamin D. In the fall and winter, a supplement is a much safer and cheaper way to get your vitamin D.

Safety Tips

- Try to find other ways to look tanned. You can apply a cream that will colour your skin and give you the appearance of a tan.
- Feel good about your real skin colour.
- Getting a tan under the lights BEFORE you go south in the winter will NOT protect your skin in the tropics. Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15 when you travel south.
- If you still want to use tanning lights, always protect your eyes by wearing goggles (eye protectors) that must be available from the salon.
- Try to convince your teenagers not to use tanning salons.

