



Connect with Kids

WebSource

Video Short

Tanning Beds More Dangerous Than Previously Thought

By CWK Network Producer

"The major wavelength found in a tanning parlor is the most carcinogenic wavelength in the ultraviolet spectrum." -- Tiffani Hamilton, M.D., Dermatologic Surgeon

When warm weather approaches, for many teens it's time to tan. Rather than heading outdoors, many are spending time in the tanning booth – a controversial product the American Academy of Pediatrics says children should avoid and the FDA is now regulating more heavily than before.

As a teenager, Pam Ganer says she went to the tanning salon everyday. "If I got off work at like 9 or 9:30 and they close at like 10, I'd still try and go."

Some states already require teens to get their parents' permission before using a tanning booth. An FDA advisory panel is reviewing whether or not to place even more Federal restrictions on tanning beds, moving them into a different class of devices that require more stringent regulation, like special assurances, labeling requirements and other performance standards.

The reason? Doctors say tanning beds are far worse than the sun at causing skin cancer.

"The major wavelength found in a tanning parlor is the most carcinogenic wavelength in the ultraviolet spectrum," says Tiffani Hamilton, M.D., A dermatologic surgeon. She says indoor tanning will dramatically increase the odds of getting melanoma – the worst form of skin cancer.

"People that tan at least one time per month for at least a year have a 55 percent greater risk of getting a melanoma," says Dr. Hamilton.

And the problem is even worse for teens.

"The immune system is not fully developed," explains Dr. Hamilton. "So when they sustain cellular damage, they are not able to correct that cellular damage quite as efficiently. They are at an even higher risk of developing cancer than someone say in their 30's who goes to the tanning bed."

The American Academy of Pediatrics says that anyone under 21 should avoid tanning beds and has called for a ban on the use of tanning beds by children. The World Health Organization calls tanning beds "carcinogenic to humans."

Mary Ganer, Pam's mom, says she is worried about tanning bed's effects on her daughter.

"I tell her all the time, 'why aren't you covering your face? Are you watching for spots? You're going too much.'"

The tanning industry says moderate tanning is safe. Dermatologists, however, disagree.

"I don't think tanning beds should be used at all," says Dr. Hamilton.

What Parents Need to Know

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, more than 1 million people tan in tanning salons on an average day, nearly 70 percent of them are girls and women ages 16 to 29. A study recently released by San Diego State University

public health researchers has found that not only are there still plenty of indoor tanning salons in America's big cities, in many places there are more tanning salons than Starbucks or McDonalds.

Studies have also shown that excessive exposure to UV radiation during indoor tanning leads to skin aging, immune suppression and eye damage, including cataracts and ocular melanoma. Even the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has declared tanning beds to be a known carcinogen. Researchers say the popularity of indoor tanning with adolescent girls in recent years may also be behind a recent increase in melanoma rates among U.S. women aged 15-39.

Experts suggest the following advice:

- Do not allow your teen to use tanning beds. Do not make exceptions, even for the prom or a special event. (Tiffani Hamilton, M.D., Dermatologic Surgeon, Atlanta Dermatology, Vein and Research Center)
- Avoid deliberate sunbathing. If you must be in the sun, wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, even on cloudy days. Sunscreens should be applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors. Even waterproof sunscreens should be reapplied every 2 hours, after swimming or strenuous exercise. (American Academy of Dermatology)
- Dermatologists recommend doing a skin check monthly. That way you will be more likely to notice any changes or even find a skin cancer when it is still small. The best time to check yourself is after a shower when your skin is clean. Use a full-length mirror as well as a hand-held mirror. Become familiar with your birthmarks, moles and blemishes so you know what they usually look like. Be sure to examine your palms, fingernails and feet when you do your skin check. (American Cancer Society)
- Use the **ABCD** rule to check moles and birthmarks for the usual signs of melanoma.
 - **Assymetry:** Half of a mole or birthmark does not match the other.
 - **Border:** The edges are ragged, notched, irregular or blurred.
 - **Color:** The color is not the same all over, but may have differing shades of brown or black, sometimes with patches of red, white or blue.
 - **Diameter:** The area is larger than 6 millimeters (the size of a pencil eraser) or the area is growing. (American Cancer Society)

Resources

- [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [The Skin Cancer Foundation](#)
- [Web MD](#)

Websource Video Link: [Websource/Video_Short/2015_updated_video_shorts](#)