



Tanning Health Risk Information

Artificial tanning at tanning facilities exposes people to high doses of ultraviolet radiation (UVR) and has been associated with a significant increase in the risk of melanoma skin cancer.

Tanning beds fall into the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) highest cancer risk category - group 1 - 'carcinogenic to humans'. The association between indoor tanning facility use and melanoma skin cancer risk is consistent with the knowledge that melanoma is caused by exposure to ultraviolet radiation. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation in young people has been established as an important contributing factor for melanoma risk in adults.

Before using a tanning bed, consider the following:

- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Canada, occurring more frequently among younger individuals. Skin cancer can be fatal, and the risk of developing skin cancer increases with a history of sunburn and as total UV radiation exposure increases.
- Sunburn is the inflammation of the skin due to excess exposure to UV radiation; redness and pain may develop almost immediately in severe cases, or within 24 hours in milder cases.
- Repeated exposure to ultraviolet radiation can cause premature aging characterized by wrinkling, dryness and fragility.
- Use protective eyewear while tanning to prevent burns and long-term injury to the eyes.
- Intentional exposure to the sun or a tanning unit should be avoided for 48 hours after exposure to ultraviolet radiation from a tanning unit.