The Illinois Dermatological Society is extremely concerned with the growing patronage of indoor tanning facilities by adolescents. Tanning with UV radiation lamps has been linked to melanoma, squamous cell carcinoma, molecular damage associated with skin cancer, and other acute damage to the eyes and skin. Prohibiting the use of indoor tanning devices for all minors under the age of 18 is critical to preventing future skin cancers.

The Real Consequences of Indoor Tanning

Meaghan Bruckner used tanning beds as a teen and was diagnosed with melanoma at 20 years old (now 30 years old). She underwent multiple surgeries to remove the cancer from her right shoulder. Following three months of treatment, she still had to give herself an injection every other day for the next nine months. Meaghan couldn’t eat, sleep or laugh - her mental health suffered and still suffers to this day. “Tanning parlors were no big deal when I was in high school / early college. We all went in and baked our bodies.”

Tracy Burian began visiting tanning salons three to four times a week when she was 15 years old. In 2008 she was diagnosed with a melanoma on her leg. “No one should have to experience what I did.”

Amber Ryne is a 29 year old mother from Palatine, Illinois. She was diagnosed with a melanoma weeks before having her first child. “I urge the Illinois legislature to enact HB 4017 and SB 2816. Furthermore, I believe the proposed legislation will help prevent future melanomas.”

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Protect Illinois Teens from the Dangers of Indoor Tanning

“Illinois dermatologists wish to prevent the cause of melanoma, not just treat the symptoms.”

The Illinois Dermatological Society is extremely concerned with the growing patronage of indoor tanning facilities by adolescents. Tanning with UV radiation lamps has been linked to melanoma, squamous cell carcinoma, molecular damage associated with skin cancer, and other acute damage to the eyes and skin. Prohibiting the use of indoor tanning devices for all minors under the age of 18 is critical to preventing future skin cancers.

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Illinois Dermatological Society
We Don’t Let Them Smoke…Why Would We Allow Them to Tan?

It is illegal to sell tobacco products to minors because they have been scientifically proven to cause cancer. As stated by the Melanoma Foundation, the use of tanning beds once a month increases the risk of melanoma by 75%, if you are under age 35. If tanning devices produce a carcinogenic risk, why would we not ban that as well?

Countless scientific studies have shown clear and compelling evidence that tanning bed use increases the risk of developing all forms of skin cancer. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the World Health Organization have recognized the carcinogenic risks associated with tanning bed use.

The American Academy of Dermatology, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association and the World Health Organization, among others, have all expressed support for this regulation. In 2009, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), part of the World Health Organization, conducted a metaanalysis and has since placed tanning beds in its Class 1 carcinogen category. Cigarettes, plutonium and ultraviolet radiation from the sun are in the same category. Some key findings from their studies include:

- Use of indoor tanning devices represents a significant and avoidable risk factor for the development of both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers. Other adverse effects due to indoor tanning include burns, solar skin damage, infection, and possibly also addictive behavior.
- A person who has used tanning devices for more than 50 hours, 100 sessions, or 10 or more years is 2.5 to 3 times more likely to develop melanoma than a person who has never tanned indoors.
- 78 percent of melanomas in people 16-29 years of age can be attributable to even one session of a tanning device use.
- Use of indoor tanning in the past year was higher among girls and among the older age groups. These proportions among 14-, 15-, 16- and 17-year-old girls were 8.5%, 13.6%, 20.9%, and 26.8%, respectively.
- The presence of state legislation restricting minors’ access to indoor tanning by requiring parental consent has limited effectiveness.

No Economic Damage Realized

The Illinois Dermatological Society’s efforts to regulate indoor tanning facilities are not an effort to put indoor tanning facilities out of business. By their own statistics, indoor tanning is a $5 billion a year industry in the United States. Furthermore, many of these businesses offer spray-on tanning services, which, unlike tanning beds, are not associated with increased skin cancer risk. The growing use of these spray-on tanning services is a reasonable and safe way for tanning facilities to sustain their businesses.

According to a recent article in Smart Tan magazine, tanning salons in Victoria, Canada found that business remained steady, and in some cases increased after the city banned tanning under the age of 18.

In Columbia, Maryland where this ban is also in effect, registered tanning salons in Howard County showed perfect compliance. According to the County Health Officer, Dr. Peter Belenson, not one tanning salon allowed teenagers to get a non-spray tan. In addition, he reported no complaints from the tanning salon owners regarding the loss of business or otherwise.

References


Ban Indoor Tanning for Adolescents – Regardless of Parental/Guardian Consent

Support HB 1666 / SB 1329 – Amend the Tanning Facility Permit Act

Why would Illinois Dermatologists seek to regulate the Indoor Tanning Industry?

Indoor tanning is strongly linked to melanoma. Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old and the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults 15-29 years old.

A recent study published in the International Journal of Cancer found that, compared with study participants who had never used a tanning bed, the risk of melanoma was 41% percent higher for those who had ever used a tanning bed. The risk was approximately doubled for those who reported more than 10 lifetime sessions.1 The rates of indoor tanning for teen girls in the United States are high; in a national sample, approximately 40% of 17- to 18-year-old girls had used indoor tanning in the past year.2 In Illinois, there will be approximately 2,280 new melanoma cases diagnosed in 2011, and an estimated 360 people in Illinois will die from the disease each year.

Epidemiologic data suggests that most skin cancers can be prevented if children, adolescents, and adults are protected from UV radiation. Banning people under the age of 18 from using tanning beds would decrease their risk of melanoma.