New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman

Dear New Yorkers:

To many people, indoor tanning seems like a harmless activity. It's not. Each session increases your risk of skin cancer and contributes to premature aging, eye damage, allergic reactions and more.

There are many myths and misconceptions concerning the safety of "tanning," many of them perpetrated by the indoor tanning salon industry. If you engage in indoor tanning or are thinking about it, it's important to make sure you know the significant associated health risks.

This brochure outlines the facts about indoor tanning to help you make more informed decisions about taking these risks. We have also provided links to more information.

It's important to be well informed about all consumer and health decisions. If you would like to know more about these or any other issues, please go to our website: www.ag.ny.gov.

Sincerely,

Eric T. Schneiderman

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Resources

Office of the Attorney General

800-771-7755

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If you would like to know more about the health and safety risks of indoor tanning, please check some of these sources.

New York State Department of Health
www.health.ny.gov
www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/tanning/

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov
www.fda.gov/radiation-emittingproducts/radiationemittingproductsandprocedures/tanning/default.htm

American Academy of Dermatology
www.aad.org/
https://www.aad.org/spot-skin-cancer/understanding-skin-cancer/dangers-of-indoor-tanning

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
www.cdc.gov
Is Indoor Tanning Safe? http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/indoor_tanning.htm

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The following leading national organizations recognize the high cancer risk associated with indoor tanning:

American Academy of Dermatology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Cancer Society
American Medical Association
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE
of the
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Indoor Tanning:

Know the Risks, Know the Facts

Indoor Tanning: Know The Risks

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is a form of energy from natural or artificial sunlight. Excess UV radiation can damage the DNA in your skin and increase the production of the skin pigment melanin, which causes your skin to change color. Here are some of the serious, identified risks:

- Melanoma skin cancer — Using tanning beds before age 35 can result in an estimated 59% greater risk of developing this sometimes deadly skin cancer. Melanoma is a common cancer in young people.
- The World Health Organization has placed indoor tanning in its highest cancer risk category, "carcinogenic to humans," the same category as tobacco;
- Premature aging ("photoaging") can cause the skin to look leathery and wrinkled, and can result in dark spots forming on the skin;
- Burns and injury to the skin and eyes;
- Allergic reactions;
- Immune suppression.

Additional factors can increase these risks:

- Light complexions that burn easily;
- Family member who has had skin cancer;
- Teenagers and younger — indoor tanning at young ages increases risk later in life;
- Immune deficiencies, chronic diseases, and certain medications may make you more sensitive to UV radiation.

Know the Facts : Dispelling Myths and Misconceptions

"Indoor tanning is less dangerous" FALSE

Some people argue that indoor tanning is less dangerous than outdoor tanning because the intensity of the light and the time spent tanning are controlled. The truth is:

- UV output of tanning devices is much greater — up to 15 times greater — than natural sunlight and the bulbs are very close to your skin;
- Not all tanning devices emit the same amount of UV radiation, so exposure is inconsistent and not as controlled as advertised;
- Tanning salon operators are not typically health care professionals and lack the training and knowledge associated with UV over exposure. In fact, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1,800 injuries requiring visits to the emergency room are attributed to UV radiation from tanning beds each year.

Tanning and Minors: The Law

Teenage girls and young women are often targeted by advertising that promotes indoor tanning as safe. Research clearly demonstrates that the earlier an individual indoor tans, the greater the risk for skin cancer in later years. The American Academy of Pediatrics even states, "Tanning salons are not safe and should not be used by teenagers or others."

New York State Public Health Law prohibits persons under age seventeen from using UV tanning devices. It also requires that persons seventeen years of age have a parent or legal guardian sign a consent form before using them. Those eighteen or older must provide a driver's license or other government or school issued photo identification before using UV radiation devices.

"Indoor tanning is a safe way to acquire vitamin D." FALSE

Scientific studies have proven that most people receive enough vitamin D from food and natural sunlight. If additional vitamin D is needed, a supplement containing vitamin D corrects this deficiency safely, without the UV exposure risk associated with cancer.

"A prevacation — or 'base' — tan protects you from getting a sunburn." FALSE

The truth is that indoor tans provide a sun protection factor (SPF) of 3, which is way below the generally recommended 30 SPF to protect against sunburns. So, not only are prevacation tanners exposed to UV radiation at indoor tanning salons prior to their trip, they also are not protected from sunburns while they are vacationing. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has found no evidence that getting a "base tan" reduces the risk of skin cancer.

Take Precautions if Taking the Risk

People who choose to expose themselves to UV radiation from indoor tanning and ignore the health warnings associated with this dangerous activity should take certain safety precautions, including:

- Wear FDA-certified protective goggles provided at no charge by the tanning salon, making sure they fit snugly and are not cracked;
- Follow manufacturer-recommended exposure times for your skin type (and do not exceed your prescribed time limit);
- Seek immediate medical attention for severe burns, allergic reactions and unusual skin lesions or sores.