

## Wellness Articles

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An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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## Sunbeds and skin cancer

Child getting ready for graduation? Think you need a tan before your vacation? No matter what the motivation now, it's not worth risking skin cancer in the future.

UVR exposure through indoor tanning equipment has been linked to all forms of skin cancer, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization has placed UV tanning beds into its highest cancer risk category, "carcinogenic to humans," thereby ranking tanning beds equal to well-known carcinogens like asbestos and tobacco.

The risk of getting skin cancer is consistently higher among those who started using sunbeds at an earlier age, and for a longer time. In fact, the use of tanning equipment before the age of 35 increases the risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, by 59%. Unfortunately, many young people are still "fake tanning" anyways.

While many teens are aware of the effects of overexposure to UV rays, they don't see their trip to the tanning salon before graduation or vacation as dangerous. But, every trip adds up—any more than 10 tanning sessions can double the risk of Melanoma, the deadliest skin cancer.

Talk to your kids about skin cancer, and be a healthy example. Here are some facts you can share with your kids:

Tanning beds are NOT a safe way to get your vitamin D. Why increase your risk of skin cancer when taking a vitamin D supplement is safer and cheaper?

Artificial tanning is more dangerous than the sun. Some tanning beds emit 10-15 times more UVA radiation than the midday sun. That means eight minutes in a bed is like 1-2 hours on a beach—without sunscreen.



It has been estimated that an indoor tan offers a sun protection factor (SPF) of only 2 – 4, while an SPF of 30 is the minimum sunscreen recommended. Plus, a base tan is created only at the expense of further skin damage, some of which will be permanent and additional damage to DNA.

To learn more – including how to talk to your teen - visit <http://www.thebigburn.ca/indoor-tanning-101/>