

Indoor Tanning

Information Sheet



What is indoor tanning?

Indoor tanning is using a tanning bed, booth or sunlamp to get tan.

Indoor tanning exposes the body to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. **UV radiation** is given off by the sun and from bulbs during indoor tanning.

UV rays damage skin cells, can change the skin texture and lead to an earlier onset of wrinkles. UV rays can cause eye cancer and skin cancers such as basal cell, squamous cell and melanoma.

Melanoma is the deadliest kind of skin cancer. Melanoma may be cured if it is found in an early stage.

In Wisconsin, the number of individuals being diagnosed with melanoma is increasing.

Is indoor tanning safer than outdoor tanning?

No. Indoor and outdoor tanning are both dangerous. Tan skin means the skin cells have been damaged by UV radiation.

Is indoor tanning okay to get a base tan in order to prevent future sunburn?

No. You can still get sunburn from indoor tanning, and even a tan indicates damage to your skin. To prevent future sunburn, follow our UV protection tips on the other side of this sheet.

Is indoor tanning a safe way to get Vitamin D?


No. Vitamin D is important for bone health and the safest way to get Vitamin D is through diet and supplements.

Am I at an increased risk for melanoma if I have been indoor tanning?

The risk of melanoma greatly increases for individuals who indoor tan, especially for those who started using tanning beds before the age of 35. The risk of developing melanoma increases with each indoor tanning use.



Are there any tests that can find melanomas early?

 Turn over for more information

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Examine your moles monthly by using the ABCD method:

- **A**symmetry: one half of the mole does not match the other half
- **B**order irregularity: the edges are ragged, notched or blurred
- **C**olor: different colors of tan, brown or black in mole
- **D**iameter: the mole is bigger than a pencil eraser head or is getting bigger

Talk to your health care provider about any moles or spots that you are concerned about. Some of these moles may be okay, but the only way to know is to talk to your health care provider about them.

How can I protect myself from UV radiation?

You can lower your exposure to UV radiation by making healthy choices.

- Avoid indoor tanning
- Use sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) 15 or higher with UVA and UVB protection
- Seek shade or limit sun exposure during the midday (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.)
- Wear protective clothing such as a hat that shades your face, neck and ears
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes

UV protection is important all year round, including winter. You are exposed to UV rays from the sun even on cloudy days. UV rays can reflect off of surfaces like water, cement and snow.

Where can I get more information?

The Rural Cancer Network (RCaN) offers other user-friendly, cancer educational handouts. For more information about skin cancer, please see the “Skin Cancer: Information Sheet” handout.

Website: www.ruralcancernetwork.org

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides information and resources on cancer prevention, screening and specific cancer types.

Phone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Website: www.cdc.gov/cancer



Carbone Cancer Center
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH



ruralcancernetwork.org



**Cancer Health
Disparities Initiative**

For more local information, please contact:

Place label here

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