Indoor tanning raises the risk of skin cancer

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Let’s be clear. No matter how tanning-salon owners try to misrepresent things, there absolutely is consensus on tanning beds. Tanning beds cause skin cancer. In July 2009, the World Health Organization raised the classification of the use of UV-emitting tanning devices to group 1, placing tanning beds alongside tobacco, asbestos and uranium as a definite cause of cancer. Other studies have concluded that individuals who use indoor tanning before age 30 increase their risk of melanoma by 75 percent. There’s no debate. There’s no “other side to the story.”

WHO’s International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded that people can receive sufficient Vitamin D through minimal natural sun exposure or dietary sources. The usefulness of indoor tanning in this regard is questionable, and poses unnecessary risks of skin damage and melanoma.

Roswell Park Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society reject the notion that the research on tanning is inconclusive. Despite many warnings about the dangers of indoor tanning, teenagers continue to be a large percentage of the tanning industry’s consumers. We’ve seen a marked increase in young people presenting with melanoma who have a history of using tanning booths.

Melanoma incidence in the United States has been increasing for the past 30 years. Over a recent 30-year time span, the rates of melanoma increased 64 percent among white men and 153 percent among white women.

Our organizations stand together to strongly support legislation to protect kids from skin cancer by eliminating the use of tanning beds by minors under the age of 18. The “other special interests” the authors of a May 17 letter referred to have no goal in promoting this legislation besides taking steps to make sure that fewer people will develop cancer.

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