



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Precision Cuts and Tanning, located at 609 E. 13th Ave., is one store that has recently experienced an increase in customers.

Skin cancer should concern both 'fake' and real tanners

■ An estimated 9,600 Americans will die of exposure-related skin cancers in the year 2000

By Darren Freeman
Oregon Daily Emerald

With spring break approaching, many University students are thwarting the still-drizzly Oregon weather and getting a head start on their summer tans.

Business at local tanning salons is booming, with salon owners reporting as many as 200 customers each day.

"From 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. every single day, we are completely booked," said Sunsational Tanning & Beauty Salon owner DeLynn Tucke.

The recent increased business at tanning salons is indicative of our culture's long-standing reverence for sun-bronzed skin and derision of pale skin, owners said, but many doctors worry that Americans' love of the tan is becoming a health hazard.

"People are going on vacations, they want to put their shorts on and they don't want to look pasty white," said Tammi Cantwell, a

Tanners' Paradise manager who also tans regularly. "Obviously, you look healthier when you're tan."

Dr. James Kitterman, a specialist in diseases of the skin, said the opposite is true, however. Regular tanning is far from healthy, he said.

Excessive exposure to ultraviolet rays, be it from the sun or a tanning bed, has been found to weaken the immune system, prematurely age the skin and cause skin cancer.

The American Cancer Society projects 1.3 million new cases of basal cell or squamous cell skin cancer to develop this year. Both forms of cancer are rarely lethal and highly curable when detected and treated early. But the ACS predicts 9,600 Americans will die in the year 2000 from skin cancer, mostly from melanoma cancer.

Though the causes of melanoma are still largely unknown, Kitterman said the "vast majority" of skin cancer cases are caused by excessive sun exposure.

"Salon owners espouse that regular tanning is non-damaging and doesn't lead to cancer and aging," Kitterman said. "But that's

not the case. Tanning is definitely not a safe thing to do."

Tracy Kimball, salon coordinator at Precision Cuts & Tanning, disagreed, saying her business informs all customers of the risks of tanning and reserves the right to deny service to customers who are obviously sunburned.

Sunsational Tanning & Beauty Salon also takes precautions by not allowing customers to tan longer than ten minutes each session and no more often than every other day. Oregon law requires sessions not exceed 20 minutes.

Both Kimball and Tucker said their employees take an annual course on tanning safety. The course teaches salon employees to identify skin types, recommend proper lotions, use appropriate sun bulbs and operate according to law.

But such courses are not required and constitute an additional expense, about \$150 for each employee, that some tanning salons choose not to accept.

"It's not cheap for me to do, but it's well worth my while to have our girls educated," Tucker said. "A little bit of prevention is better than reparation at the end."

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