

Tanning: good for confidence...bad for health

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I tan, and I'm not alone. I am one of the many teenage girls (as well as teenage guys, grandmothers, etc.) who has jumped the bandwagon. Tanning is a growing trend in the United States, coming to the aid of those ghostly pale girls and boys who desire a golden glow.

Many people use natural sunlight in the months of May-August, and tanning beds during the rest of the year. But members of the Food and Drug Administration, American Medical Association and Web MD all agree that both forms of tanning are dangerous; I disagree. The American Academy of

disease according to the American Cancer Society website and is one of the few cancers found in young people. It is the second most common cancer among women ages 20 to 35, and rising in cancers for male adults. People with fair skin, freckling, or red or blond hair have a higher risk of melanoma.

Excessive tanning can also cause premature aging of the skin giving it a wrinkled, leathery look. The rays also affect your eyes as well, even through your eyelid. UVA rays are known for damaging the retinas, and over a long time period, can burn the corneas.

When you're tanning in natural light, you are aware of your

(a light layer of sunscreen and goggles), the more chance there is of seeing long-term effects.

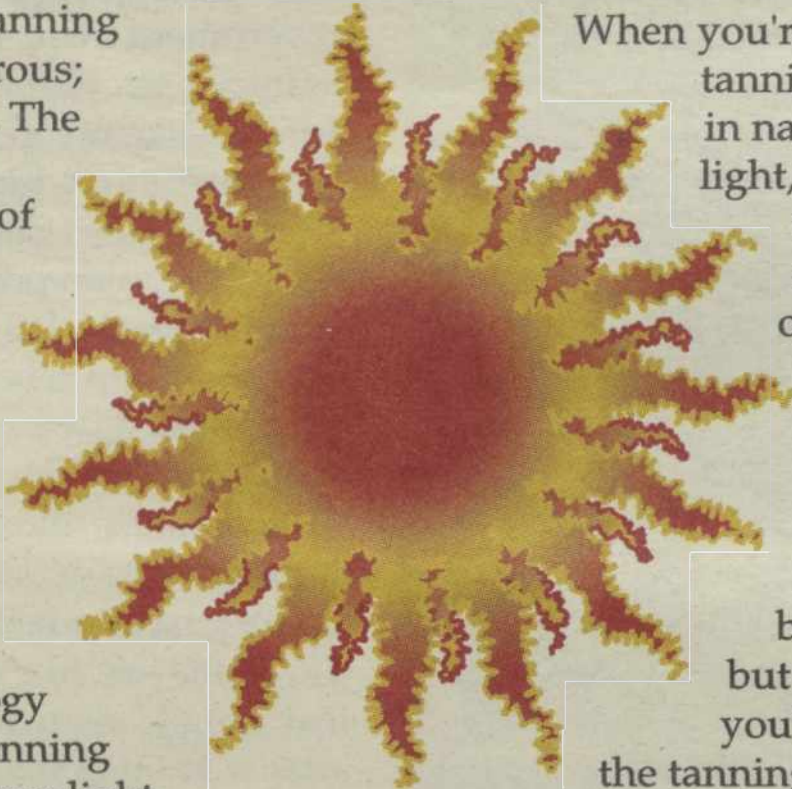
When I started to write this article, I was convinced that bed tanning was safer than natural tanning. But as I conducted research, I realized how horribly wrong I was. Melanoma is the fastest growing cancer out there—especially among youth.

Sure, I've read the warnings in the tanning room that talks about eye damage. Of course I've heard about excessive tanning, both natural and in a bed. Everyone knows about the potential danger of cancer. I thought *that can't be right...that must just be hype and overzealous experts who are trying to discourage youth.* That is far from true. It's all true. You can't just assume that tanning in a salon prevents heat rash and sunburns. The only up-side of tanning in beds is no tan lines (if you choose to go commando in the bed) and faster results...sometimes.

I tan almost every day, for 15 minutes in a bed twice the strength of a basic 20 minute bed. I use a hot lotion, and no goggles. And on my right shoulder blade, I have this mole that may need to be checked out soon.

Luckily, for those of us who are ghostly pale and realize that tanning is not safe, there are other, hopefully safer options out there: spray on tan, lotion that makes you tan, and the most popular: Mystic Tanning. Most modern tanning salons have Mystic Tanning as an option. Popular among girls during Winter Ball and Prom time, just be prepared for a few...side effects. Spotting, blotching, and maybe being a slight shade of orange.

Oh, the sacrifices we make for beauty.



eyelids

burning, but when you're in the tanning beds, exposed skin

stays cool to the touch, so it's harder to distinguish when you are doing damage. The FDA requires all tanning salons to tell their customers to wear goggles.

There is a move by the AMA and AAD to pass legislation banning anyone under the age of 18 from using tanning beds even when they have a parent signature.

Most people believe that if they tan in moderation (two or three days a week) and use protective eye care (goggles, disposable eye stickers), they won't get cancer or that they won't develop cataracts. Sure, they may luck out, but the more they tan without protections

Dermatology deemed tanning in natural sunlight medically safer when used with precautions than tanning in a bed.

The most dangerous part about tanning in a bed, as well as in the sun, are the UV Rays. Ultraviolet A (UVA) and Ultraviolet B (UVB) are the rays that penetrate the skin and cause the tan. UVA rays are known for deep penetration of the skin which is what makes you tan. UVB are known for causing sunburns, since they only tan the top layer of skin.

New research now proves that there is a link between UVA rays and malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer. Nearly 8,000 people in the U.S. die each year from this

STUDENTS

PEAK OUT

How do you feel about tanning?

Amy Holt, junior



"I think it's really bad. I used to like it. It lasts for a little while and then you have skin damage."

Max Henderson, sophomore



"It's not for guys. I don't think they are thinking about the consequences."

Dan Henelley, senior



"It's a staple in my life. If I don't have a healthy bronze on my skin, I'm pissed."

Chelsea Hughes, sophomore



"I like them because I go all the time, like two or three times a week for 20 minutes."

India Hubbard, freshman



"If you do it too much you look fake because you look orange."

Callan Gray



"I had trouble getting lost and found myself walking in circles."

Sam Ihrig



"Overall, everything is harder than middle school; it sucks."