

# Indoor Tanning: Young Women Not Heeding the Warning

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About a quarter of non-Hispanic white women, including both high school students and young adults, use indoor tanning methods, according to results from a new study. This risky practice may come with a heavy toll, the researchers warn.

The study was published online August 19 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

"Melanoma incidence rates are steadily increasing, especially among young non-Hispanic white females, which may be due, in part, to indoor tanning," write Gery P. Guy Jr, PhD, MPH, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, and colleagues.

Previous studies have shown that using indoor tanning devices before age 35 years increases risk for melanoma by as much as 75%, and melanoma risk increases 1.8% with each additional tanning session per year.

Until now, however, data on the prevalence of indoor tanning in young non-Hispanic white women are limited.

Therefore, Dr. Guy and colleagues analyzed data from 2 surveys: the 2011 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which covered high school students, and the 2010 National Health Interview Survey, which covered adults aged 18 to 34 years.

For the purposes of the study, the researchers defined engaging in indoor tanning as having used an indoor tanning device such as a sun lamp, sun bed, or tanning booth at least once during the 12 months before the survey. Frequent indoor tanning was defined as using those devices at least 10 times during the previous 12 months.

Among non-Hispanic white female high school students, 29.3% engaged in indoor tanning, whereas 16.7% engaged in frequent indoor tanning during the previous 12 months. In addition, the prevalence of indoor tanning increased with age within this study group.

For women aged 18 to 34 years, the picture was somewhat different. Although about a quarter (24.9%) engaged in indoor tanning and 15.1% engaged in frequent indoor tanning, the prevalence of that behavior decreased with age.

The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends counseling fair-skinned people aged 10 to 24 years to minimize their exposure to ultraviolet light, such as natural sunlight or light from indoor tanning methods.

The authors also note that certain intervention strategies, such as self-guided booklets, videos on photoaging, and peer counseling sessions, have all been shown to reduce the prevalence of indoor tanning by as much as 35%.

"Other approaches to reducing UV exposure from indoor tanning include the US Food and Drug Administration's proposed reclassification of indoor tanning devices from low- to moderate-risk devices requiring premarket notification and labels designed to warn young people not to use them, the 10% excise tax on indoor tanning services established through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, limiting deceptive advertising claims about indoor tanning, and limiting indoor tanning among minors," the authors conclude.

*The authors have disclosed no relevant financial relationships.*

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