

# Tanning beds just as dangerous as sun bathing, dermatologist says

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Despite the fact that 30 states in America have restrictions on the use of commercial tanning beds by those 18 and younger, Idaho recently joined 17 states that do not restrict tanning bed use among minors.

"You wouldn't stand naked a few inches from the sun, yet that is essentially what you are doing in a tanning bed," said Julie Moore, MD, dermatologist, Gottlieb Memorial Hospital, part of the Loyola University Health System. "Tanning beds are just as dangerous as outdoor sun bathing when it comes to the potential for [skin cancer](#)."

Women ages 18 to 25 are the fastest-growing group for a new diagnosis of skin cancer, according to the American Academy of Dermatology.

Why? At this age, women put more value in their appearance and feel they are invincible, Moore said. "Wrinkles, age spots and leathery skin have not yet happened to them."

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), less than one-third of all young people take the proper steps to protect their skin from excessive exposure to the sun. Having just one blistering childhood sunburn more than doubles the chance of developing a melanoma - the deadliest form of skin cancer - later in life, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.

Moore points out there are more options than ever for those who seek a healthy glow. "Bare arms, shoulders and legs can be safely bronzed using

self-tanning creams and lotions to achieve a healthy appearance without the unhealthy side effects." Gone are the days when skin turned orange due to drugstore tanning lotions. "There are many excellent brands at the drugstore today that create a very realistic color," Moore said. "I use self-tanning lotion found over the counter year-round."

Here are Dr. Moore's five favorite tips for protecting skin from cancer:

- "During your next hair, pedicure or massage appointment, ask if there are any unusual moles or [skin lesions](#)." Self-checking in certain areas is very difficult; don't hesitate to enlist the aid of those around you to monitor your skin's health."
- "Create a map of your skin and note any changes. Draw an outline of a body, front and back, and note on the diagram where you have moles or spots. Include comments such as the size, shape and color. After bathing, when you towel off and apply lotion is a good time to get in the habit of performing self-checks. Use a hand-held mirror to view between toes and the bottom of your feet and back."
- "Know your A, B, C, D and E's: A-Asymmetrical, B-Border, C-Color, D-Diameter and E-Evolving. These describe how to evaluate a mole."
- "Slip, slap and slop. Slip on a long-sleeved shirt or pants. Slap on a cap or hat plus sunglasses. Slop on sunscreen. Use a shot-glass-sized portion of lotion with a sun protection factor of 30 or higher. Buy products that offer UVA and UVB protection, which should include ingredients such as zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, avobenzone and oxybenzone."
- "Use self-tanning creams and lotions to get that sun-kissed glow. Don't risk your life for the prom. Wrinkles, sunspots and leathery skin are not a happy souvenir of sun bathing or [tanning beds](#), especially when you can get the same tanning effect from a

bottle."

The Skin Cancer Foundation reports that cancers in children often go undiagnosed because doctors don't think to look for skin cancer in youngsters. Unlike adults, there are currently no set guidelines for skin examinations in children.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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