

Keeping minors from tanning beds would save thousands of lives, study says

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(HealthDay)—Restricting people younger than 18 from indoor tanning

could prevent thousands of skin cancers and deaths in the United States, according to a new study.

An age limitation would also save the country hundreds of millions of dollars in [skin cancer](#) treatment costs, researchers found.

"This research concretely demonstrates the potential health benefits of an under-18 [age restriction](#) for indoor tanning," said Dr. Abel Torres, president of the American Academy of Dermatology Association.

People who engage in indoor tanning are exposed to ultraviolet radiation, a major risk factor for skin cancer. Using indoor tanning before age 35 increases the risk of melanoma—the deadliest type of skin cancer—with each use, the researchers said.

Last year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration proposed a ban on indoor tanning by people younger than 18. At least a dozen states and the District of Columbia already have such laws.

In this study, researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention concluded that this age restriction could prevent nearly 62,000 melanoma cases and more than 6,700 melanoma deaths over the lifetime of Americans who are currently 14 and younger. This would translate to a savings of \$342.9 million in melanoma treatment costs, the researchers said.

The findings were published online Dec. 6 in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

The American Academy of Dermatology Association has supported the age restriction since the FDA proposed it last year, Torres said.

"We hope this study motivates the FDA to save lives and lower [health](#)

[care costs](#) by finalizing this proposal as soon as possible. Moreover, we hope these dramatic figures remind the public, especially young people, to stay out of indoor tanning beds," Torres said in a journal news release.

An age restriction on indoor tanning could be a significant step forward in the fight against skin cancer, agreed study author Gery Guy, a health economist at the CDC.

"By restricting the use of [indoor tanning](#) devices among minors, we could potentially save thousands of lives," Guy added.

More information: The American Cancer Society has more on the [dangers of indoor tanning](#).

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