

# Why some are still skeptical of tanning bed risks

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(HealthDay)—The health risks are high for young people who use tanning beds, but not all parents seem to see it that way.

To figure out why that is, researchers polled more than 1,200 parents of U.S. kids aged 11 to 17 years. The investigators found that parents who are less likely to believe that indoor tanning is harmful for teens include:

- Fathers.
- Parents who'd used indoor tanning devices themselves.
- Parents who never received [skin cancer prevention](#) counseling from their child's doctor.
- Parents of boys.
- Parents of older teens (aged 16 to 17).
- Parents of teens whose skin was less reactive to the sun.

"Parents who have never seen their children get sunburned or discussed skin [cancer](#) prevention

with a doctor may not be aware of the dangers of unprotected exposure to ultraviolet light," study author Dr. Maryam Asgari said in a news release from the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD).

"Since mothers are often the ones to take their children to the doctor, fathers may be less likely to receive skin cancer prevention counseling from their child's provider," Asgari said. She's a dermatologist and associate professor at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital.

It's not surprising that parents might not object to their kids' tanning if they've tanned indoors themselves, Asgari said. But, "it's important for all [parents](#) to understand the dangers of tanning at a young age and communicate those dangers to their children," she added.

"If you avoid tanning beds, especially when you're young, you can reduce your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging in the future," Asgari explained.

Using indoor tanning beds before age 35 increases the risk for melanoma—the deadliest type of [skin](#) cancer—by 59 percent, and the risk rises with continued use, according to the AAD.

A 2017 study found that 45 percent of people who start [tanning](#) before age 16 do so with a family member.

Results of the new study were scheduled for presentation Friday at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology, in San Diego. Research presented at meetings should be considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [dangers of indoor tanning](#).

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