

FDA proposes ban on indoor tanning for minors

18 December 2015, by Matthew Perrone



This Dec. 9, 2011 file photo shows an open tanning bed in Sacramento, Calif. On Dec. 18, 2015, Federal health officials are proposing a ban on the use of tanning beds for anyone under the age of 18, part of an ongoing effort to reduce skin cancers caused by the devices. The Food and Drug Administration proposal would also require tanning bed users to sign consent forms acknowledging the risks of the radiation-emitting devices. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

Anyone under the age of 18 would be barred from using indoor tanning equipment, under a federal proposal to help reduce skin cancer linked to the devices.

The Food and Drug Administration also wants to require [tanning](#) bed users to sign consent forms acknowledging the risks of the radiation-emitting devices. Tanning salons and other businesses would have to collect the forms from customers before their first tanning session and every six months thereafter.

Friday's announcement follows years of prodding by dermatologists and medical groups for bolder action on [indoor tanning](#), citing rising rates of [skin cancer](#) among teens and people in their 20s,

particularly women. The leading professional group for skin specialists applauded the news.

"Indoor tanning is the cigarette of this generation, it is so clearly carcinogenic," said Dr. Mark Lebwohl, president of the American Academy of Dermatology. "It is long overdue and a historic victory in our fight to eradicate skin cancer that the FDA has come out with a proposal to restrict indoor tanning."

Twenty three states already have laws banning minors from using indoor tanning equipment.

Last year the FDA required tanning beds and sun lamps to carry new warnings advising that they should not be used by anyone under age 18. The FDA has regulated tanning machines for over 30 years, but had previously taken little action to restrict their use.

"Despite available information about its adverse effects, many high schoolers continue to use indoor tanning devices," the FDA's Dr. Vasum Peiris told reporters. "Now we're taking further steps."

The FDA would be able to seize machines and fine businesses that don't follow the rules, once finalized, according to Peiris, who is a chief medical officer in the agency's device center.

The Indoor Tanning Association said decisions about tanning should be left to parents, not the government.

"We are concerned that the proposed requirements will burden our members with additional unnecessary governmental costs in an already difficult economic climate," states the group, which represents makers of tanning beds and related products.

Nearly 74,000 new cases of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, are expected to be

diagnosed this year, and the disease is expected to cause nearly 10,000 deaths, according to the American Cancer Society. While most cases are diagnosed in people in their 40s and 50s, the disease is linked to sun exposure at a young age.

Indoor tanning beds deliver between 10 to 15 times more ultraviolet radiation than the midday sun. And people who use indoor tanning equipment face a 59 percent higher risk of melanoma than those who do not, according to the American Academy of Dermatology.

About 1.6 million U.S. teenagers tan indoors each year at more than 33,000 tanning salons, gyms, spas and other facilities that offer sun lamps and [tanning beds](#), according to figures cited by the FDA.

A second proposal from the agency would require manufacturers of tanning equipment to make additional changes to their machines, including: bolder, easier-to-read warnings and mandating an emergency shut off switch.

The FDA will take public comments on its proposals for 90 days before beginning work to finalize them. There is no deadline for putting them in place.

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