

The baked and the beautiful

by Heather Kirby

As spring break rolls around the corner a desire to acquire the "Great American Tan" burns in the hearts of young people everywhere. Teens across America climb in ovens to bake themselves into a golden beauty, no matter the dangerous consequences.

These deadly bakeries are none other than the infamous tanning beds.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, over one million Americans a day visit over 18,000 tanning salons, bringing in an average of \$2 billion a year, even though the health risks are numerous.

Tanning salons are considered safe because they utilize Ultra-Violet A rays instead of Ultra-Violet B rays. UVA lights are three times stronger than the outdoor UVB lights (sunlight). To give you an idea of the strength of this light, fifteen minutes in the tanning bed is the equivalent of a full

day at the beach.

"This is the radiation that promotes early wrinkling. It can suppress your immune system so it potentiates skin cancer to form," says dermatologist Dr. David Harvey of these 'safe' UVA lights.

This form of light is linked as a cause for dangerous melanomas (skin cancers); just as UVB lights are. But UVA lights are also connected to many other dangerous effects on the body.

Claims are often made by tanning salons that they are safe and that the health risks connected to tanning beds are blown out of proportion or fabled. Tanning bed industries even go as far as to claim that these "cancer ovens" are healthy to their user.

Does it remind you of their cancer producing cousin, the Tobacco Industry?

The Tanning Industry says that skin cancer is linked to repeated burn, not repeated use. Okay, I

give them that.

For the few people who can attend the tanning bed without burn, you may be safe from melanomas.

Fungal infections, bacterial infections, and mite parasites such as scabies are several nasties that may be found in an unsanitary bed.

Across the county many unsanitized beds have been found to be spreading germs. Also, nationwide, several tanning salons have been closed because an approved sanitizer was not being used. However, most tanning salons do provide the proper sanitizer. After checking around with several of the more popular tanning salons in Rockcastle County, I have found that they all provide an approved sanitizer.

Always keep in mind the customer before you may have done a lousy job cleaning the bed. Who wants to take a chance on scabies? But what about the other health risks? UVA rays are also proven



Burns are common for tanning bed users. Going to the tanning bed resulted in a large burn down the middle of this student's back.

to be destructive to the skin. photo-aging, which is caused from exposure to UVA light, is also a terrible long term effect of the tanning bed. What is photo-aging? Picture yourself looking forty at age twenty-nine. Yes, old age complete with wrinkles and sagging skin.

Also, skin pigmentation is destroyed. Constant users begin to

appear a red or orange color instead of tan. Brown blotches and spot are also commonly seen on the skin of frequent users.

Why do teens continue to use tanning bed when so many health effects are called to the public

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Have A Great...And Safe... Spring Break!



You might be a senior about to head to Florida for a little sun, surf and relaxation. You might be staying close to home to prepare for graduation or just hanging out with friends.

Whatever your Spring Break plans may be, we remind you to use good judgement and caution.

Have a great time!

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