

# UV tanning equipment



**Important warning:** There are health risks associated with using ultraviolet (UV) tanning equipment – skin cancer, cataracts, premature ageing of the skin, sunburnt skin, dryness and itching, bumpy rashes, and eye irritation/conjunctivitis. Any exposure to UV radiation from tanning equipment is potentially harmful. Please consider the following information when deciding whether to use this equipment or not.

## **Don't use UV tanning equipment if your skin is particularly sensitive to sunlight.**

Based on World Health Organization (WHO) and Department of Health advice, you should not use UV tanning equipment if you:

- are under 18;
- have fair, sensitive skin that burns easily or tans slowly or poorly;
- have a history of sunburn, particularly in childhood;
- have a large number of freckles and/or red hair;
- have a large number of moles;
- are taking medicines or using creams that sensitise the skin to sunlight;
- have a medical condition that is worsened by sunlight;
- or anyone in your family has had skin cancer in the past;
- already have extensive skin damage due to sunlight.

The International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) has recommended not to use UV tanning equipment for non-medical purposes.

## **Know your skin**

Skin is broadly classified as being one of six types:

- **Type I** – Often burns, rarely tans. Tends to have freckles, red or fair hair, blue or green eyes.
- **Type II** – Usually burns, sometimes tans. Tends to have light hair, blue or brown eyes.
- **Type III** – Sometimes burns, usually tans. Tends to have brown hair and eyes.
- **Type IV** – Rarely burns, often tans. Tends to have dark brown eyes and hair.

■ **Type V** – Naturally brown skin. Often has brown eyes and hair.

■ **Type VI** – Naturally brown/black skin. Usually black/brown eyes.

Your UV tanning equipment operator should advise you on your skin type and guide you on how many minutes you should limit your session to. The EU Scientific Committee on Consumer Products states that people with skin types I and II should not be advised to use UV tanning equipment. If you have skin types III, IV, V or VI your operator should guide you on how many minutes to limit your session to.

## **Important points for you, the customer, to consider before you decide to use UV tanning equipment**

**Skin cancer.** In the UK, the incidence of malignant melanoma is increasing at a faster rate than any other cancer except prostate. Using UV tanning equipment when young, increases the risk of suffering from skin cancer in the future.

**Premature ageing of the skin.** In the longer term, too much use of UV tanning equipment will make your skin look coarse, leathery and wrinkled.

**Sunburnt skin.** Spending too long on UV tanning equipment can cause your skin to become painful and red, and it may blister and peel. Burning the skin from UV exposure can double your risk of skin cancer in the future.

**Protect your eyes.** Never use the UV tanning equipment without eye protection. If suitable goggles are not worn you may suffer eye irritation or conjunctivitis in the short term, and cataracts (clouding of the lens of the eye) in the long term. Do not rely on closing your eyes or using cotton wool.

**Don't use cosmetics, deodorants or accelerants while tanning.** Wash off any such products on your skin before using the equipment and make sure the equipment is clean before using it.

**General health.** Make sure you are medically fit to use the UV tanning equipment, and that you are not taking any medication, including alternative medicine and therapies, that could increase the sensitivity of your skin. Some conditions can make you more vulnerable to sunburn.

**Skin type.** Tell staff about your normal reaction to sunlight so they can advise you whether to use the equipment and if so for how long you can do so without burning (remember, using UV tanning equipment carries health risks even if you do not burn). See *Know your skin* for further information.

**Check your skin.** If you notice any abnormal skin reactions during the tanning session stop exposure at once and do not use UV tanning equipment again before seeing a doctor. If you notice any abnormal skin reactions after the tanning session do not use again before seeing a doctor. Seek medical advice promptly if you notice an unusual skin growth or a change in the size, shape or colour of a mole that occurs over weeks or months.

**Stay safe.** Make sure you understand how to use the equipment, how to turn it off and to locate the emergency button (or call for help if there is no button).

**Protect you skin in the sun.** A tan obtained from UV tanning equipment provides very little protection against sunlight. Always protect your skin from excessive exposure to the sun.



**Useful information: SunSmart, the UK's national skin cancer prevention campaign at [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)**

This information for customers is issued jointly by the Health and Safety Executive and the Department of Health. This poster accompanies the leaflet *Reducing health risks from the use of ultraviolet (UV) tanning equipment* INDG209(rev1)