

**“Health Tip: Tanning Beds Especially Dangerous to Younger People
Organizations warn that those under 35 double their skin cancer risk”
HealthDay, March, 2006**

Sir or Madam,

I am contacting you in regard to the column above written by Diana Kohnle. I submit that you do a great disservice to your readers by only telling half the story and by making statements that are simply incorrect.

There is no doubt that visiting a tanning salon can prevent sunburn. While repeated sunburn may contribute to skin problems later in life, our industry seeks to prevent the risks associated with sunburn. Professional tanning facilities work to manage exposure to ultraviolet light, based on the unique skin characteristics of each client, so that sunburn is avoided. As a result, the incidence of sunburn among those who use indoor tanning facilities is decreasing. In a recent research study of female, white, teenagers, indoor tanners are up to 81 percent less likely to sunburn outdoors than those who do not use indoor tanning..

You state, “so far, no studies have shown that tanning at a salon vs. in natural light can reduce cancer.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Cancer experts say the risks posed by other cancers are far greater than that of skin cancer, which is rarely fatal. Melanoma, the deadliest kind, is expected to account for just 1.4 percent of the 570,000 cancer deaths in the United States this year.

Several researchers, most notably Dr. William Grant have published peer-reviewed articles that demonstrate, that in America, for example, increased sun exposure would result in 185,000 fewer cases of internal cancer and 30,000 fewer deaths from cancer of the breast, ovaries, colon, prostate, bladder, uterus, esophagus, rectum and stomach. By comparison, about 7,500 die each year from skin cancer. In addition, I have attached other studies on the effects of Vitamin D on cancer prevention.

At the American Association for Cancer Research meeting in Anaheim, California last year, Dr. Edward Giovannucci, a Harvard University professor of medicine said his research suggests that vitamin D might help prevent 30 deaths for each one caused by skin cancer.

If you decide to report on this important issue again, I hope you will contact me to hear the other side of a very complex story.

Sincerely,

John Overstreet

Executive Director