

facts:

1. Over 1600 Australians die every year from skin cancer.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. GRIM (General Record of Incidence of Mortality) Books, Canberra: AIHW;2005

2. At least 2 in 3 Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.

Calculated by M. Staples from the data contained in National Cancer Control initiative, the 2002 national non-melanoma skin cancer survey. A report by the NCCI Non-melanoma Skin Cancer Working Group. Edited by M.PStaples. Melbourne: NCCI 2003.

3. Deliberately exposing your skin to radiation by using a solarium before the age of 35 will increase your risk of melanoma by 75%.

International Agency for Research on Cancer Working Group on artificial ultraviolet light and skin cancer. The association of use of sunbeds with cutaneous malignant melanoma and other skin cancers: A systematic review. International Journal of Cancer 2007;120:116-22.

For more information contact:

SunSmart
www.sunsmart.com.au

Better Health Channel
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

The Cancer Council's Cancer Helpline 13 11 20

or talk to your doctor, skin specialist, school or university nurse or Community Health Centre.



Slip on sun-protective clothing



Slop on SPF 30+ sunscreen



Slap on a hat



Seek shade when possible



Slide on some sunglasses



Leading the light



Tan from solarium.

Scar from skin cancer.

Solariums

FASHION TO DIE FOR

New Regulations for Solarium operators.

Associate Professor
John Kelly,
Director of the Victorian
Melanoma Service, Alfred Hospital



Associate Professor John Kelly dispels the solarium myths.

- Solarium tanning is safer than tanning in the sun. ... **Not True**

Solariums emit harmful levels of UV radiation that can be up to five times as strong as the midday summer sun. This is the equivalent of the UV index being over 60. (The highest UV index level in Victoria is 13.)

- If I build up my tan, I'll be protected from the sun. ... **Not True**

A tan increases your risk of skin cancer and premature ageing.

- A tan makes you look healthy. ... **Not True**

There is nothing healthy about skin cancer or damaged skin. Solariums are dangerous and threaten the lives of people who use them.

- I need a tan for a special occasion. ... **Not True**

A solarium emits a very powerful dose of UV radiation. If you must have a tan then use fake tanning products.

- A solarium is a good way of getting my Vitamin D. ... **Not True**

Most Australians will receive enough Vitamin D while doing normal day-to-day activities. Exposing your skin to extreme levels of UV radiation through a solarium is not safe. If you think you may be Vitamin D deficient, speak to your doctor.

“I assumed solariums were safe.”



26 year old Kate McCammond says she is “100 per cent confident” that her melanoma was caused by using solariums. Why is she so sure? Because she developed a melanoma on her bottom, and has never sunbaked naked or even in a g-string.

Kate first used a solarium when she was 17, and a few years later because she was

working in a solarium, she had eight minute sessions around three times a week for 5 years. In 2007, Kate saw a story about another solarium user who had developed a melanoma. Kate was shocked to see it looked just like the spot on her bottom.

Kate saw a dermatologist, who diagnosed the spot as a melanoma.

It was 2.5mm deep and a stage 4. “My dermatologist said if I'd left it any longer it could have spread.”

“It took two rounds of surgery to remove it all, and I had about 30 stitches in my bum,” Kate says.

Not only does she now have a scar as a legacy of her solarium sessions – Kate has to have regular check ups for the next few years.

Kate says she would never use a solarium again and warns all her friends not to.

“If my story stops one person from using a solarium then my job's done.”

“My dermatologist said if I'd left it any longer it could have spread.”

“My life is more important than a tan.”



Saffron Styles never expected that using a solarium might also give her a melanoma as well as a tan.

The 31-year old describes herself as a ‘consistent but irregular’ solarium user for over 10 years.

“I've used solariums on and off since I was 18. Sometimes I'd go for a while without using one at all, then I might have 2 sessions a week for a few months,” she says.

But in July 2006, Saffron noticed an unusual spot behind her knee.

“I was on holidays and saw what looked like a blood blister on the back of my knee in the full length mirrors of the hotel where I was staying.”

However, it took almost 6 months before Saffron acted. The persistence of her boyfriend and mother finally convinced her to have the spot checked by her doctor. After several months of monitoring Saffron finally had the spot removed.

Several days later Saffron's doctor called to say a biopsy had indicated the spot might



be a melanoma, and further surgery was necessary to remove more flesh. Saffron also had the lymph nodes in her groin removed, to check if they were clear of cancer – fortunately results came back negative.

However, Saffron developed a post operative infection which meant a further 8 days in hospital.

Saffron says now that she knows the risks, solariums are off limits.

In accordance with the announcement made earlier this year by Victorian Minister for Health, the Hon Daniel Andrews MP, under the Radiation Act 2005, there will be new regulations passed by the end of 2007 that will require:

- solarium operators to be licensed with the Department of Human Services;
- health warnings to be displayed;
- operators to ensure that no-one aged 15 and under is allowed to use a sun-tanning unit;
- that operators must ensure that 16 and 17 year olds can only use sun-tanning units with parental consent.