

Key facts about skin cancer

- Skin cancer is highly preventable and impacts a disproportionately high number of Oregonians.
- Limiting exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation is one of the most effective forms of skin cancer prevention.
- In the past three decades, more people have had skin cancer than all other cancers combined.
- Melanoma is the most deadly type of skin cancer; it is responsible for 75 percent of all skin cancer deaths; 1 in 8 people who are diagnosed with that form of the disease will die from it.

How Oregon compares with other states

- Women in Oregon who are diagnosed with melanoma have the highest death rate compared with those who suffer from the disease in any other state, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Oregon has the fourth highest death rate for melanoma in the nation.
- Douglas County has the highest rate of new melanoma diagnoses in the state and ranks among the highest 2 percent of counties nationwide.
- Josephine County has the fifth highest death rate among counties ranked nationwide.

Frequently asked questions about indoor tanning devices

Why are tanning devices so harmful, especially to children and young adults?

Tanning beds, booths or sun lamps all emit harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation that can damage skin and lead to a variety of skin cancers, including melanoma – one of the deadliest types of cancer.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration classifies tanning beds as a “carcinogenic to humans,” in the same category as tobacco, arsenic and mustard gas.

Research has shown that UV rays from tanning devices are particularly dangerous to children and young adults. Those who use tanning beds before they are 35, have a 75 percent higher chance of developing melanoma in their lifetime.

Why should young women understand the risks associated with tanning?

Cases of melanoma in women have nearly doubled in the past three decades, according to 2011 research by the American Academy of Dermatology and the CDC.

It only takes one visit to a tanning bed to significantly increase the risk of melanoma and other skin cancers. Forty percent of white females between the ages of 16 and 18 visit tanning facilities, according to a 2012 Congressional report.

Are there safe alternatives to indoor tanning?

Although OHSU dermatologists advise people to stick to their natural skin color, the primary chemical (DHA) used in most self-tanning lotions, creams and sprays is currently FDA-approved. Self-tanning products are generally viewed as safe alternatives to tanning beds, as long they are used correctly and not inhaled or ingested.

For more information, visit OHSU's website for [tips to help prevent skin cancer](#).

Want to get involved? Use the [find your legislator tool](#) to find contact information for your state representative.