



## **Indoor Tanning Will Preserve Your Summer Tan, but Increase Your Risk of Melanoma**

*Acupath Dermatopathologist Dr. Hollenberg warns of skin cancer dangers with indoor tanning.*

Plainview, NY ([PRWEB](#)) December 22, 2011 -- Indoor tanning has been in the news recently with California signing a new law prohibiting teens from indoor tanning. “While tanning can help preserve your summer tan, it can also increase your risk of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, by as much as 75 percent,” says George Hollenberg, MD., dermatopathologist and medical director of Acupath Laboratories in Long Island, New York.

Recent studies have led the World Health Organization, National Institutes of Health and other international health experts to rank indoor tanning among the top definite, undisputable causes of cancer. “That means tanning beds are in the same category as tobacco, arsenic and mustard gas,” said Dr. Hollenberg. “They’re deadly and at all costs need to be avoided.”

Yet according to the American Academy of Dermatology, an average of 1 million Americans each day tan at an indoor facility. Most of them are young, Caucasian women between 16 and 29 years old. Though as TV programs like “Jersey Shore” illustrate, the practice is popular with young men, too.

“Most people tan to look good—for aesthetics,” Dr. Hollenberg added. “But every time you put yourself in a tanning bed, you put yourself at risk for skin cancer—a risk that increases each time you do it. No matter what some companies purport, there are no safe tanning devices or safe number of times to tan indoors. Misinformation is a huge problem with this issue.”

Indeed, medical experts cite indoor tanning as the primary reason for the whopping 50 percent increase in melanoma cases in women under 40 over the last 20 years. If left undiagnosed and not promptly and properly treated, melanoma can spread throughout the body and be fatal. The American Cancer Society blames melanoma for more than 70,000 new cancer cases, and as many as 8,400 cancer deaths, in the U.S. each year.

Also linked to ultraviolet exposure from tanning beds—as well as from spending prolonged, unprotected periods in the sun—are basal and squamous cell cancer carcinomas, which annually affect more than 1 million Americans and lead to 2,000 cancer deaths. Skin cancer (melanoma, basal cell and squamous cell together) is the No. 1 cause of cancer in the United States, affecting more people than breast, lung, prostate, colon, uterine, ovarian and pancreatic cancer combined.

Because of the definitive connection between indoor tanning and skin cancer, 32 states now require tanning salons to receive in-person parental consent before a minor can tan. In New York, youths under 14 are prohibited from tanning at all.

Dr. Hollenberg is one of many medical experts—including members of a federal skin cancer advisory panel—lobbying the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to ban anyone under age 18 from using tanning beds. However, like the American Cancer Society, his preference is that people avoid tanning beds altogether.

“There are many cancer risk factors we can’t control, such as age and family history. But especially with skin



cancer, there are many things we can control,” Dr. Hollenberg said, “including staying away from tanning beds.”

Also, to protect skin from the sun’s ultraviolet rays, which even during fall and winter can burn and cause damage, Dr. Hollenberg recommends:

- Not leaving the house without applying a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to exposed areas
- Protecting the face and head with a wide-brimmed hat
- Wearing light-colored clothes to help deflect the sun’s rays
- Limiting the time spent in direct sun, especially between 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., when its rays are strongest

People should also know the “ABCDEs” of melanoma and skin cancer, so they can point out new or unusual skin spots to their doctor. Melanoma is most often seen on the back, chest, legs, face and ears, forming on its own or growing out of an existing mole. Its ABCDE characteristics include:

A—Asymmetry. Half of the mole or mark does not match the other.

B—Border irregularity. Edges are ragged, notched or blurred.

C—Colors are different within the same mole. Shades of brown or black may be seen, sometimes with patches of red, white or blue.

D—Diameter greater than 6 millimeters, roughly the size of a pencil eraser.

E—Enlargement. It’s grown or changed over time.

Bio: As the founding director of Acupath Laboratories, Inc., Dr. George Hollenberg supervises the analysis of thousands of biopsies each year, utilizing the most cutting-edge technology in histology, immunohistochemistry and FISH (fluorescence in situ hybridization) as well as the latest advances in computerized report preparation. He is a veteran in the fields of pathology and dermatopathology, with expertise in the areas of dysplastic nevi, melanoma and other forms of cancer. Board-certified in dermatopathology and clinical and anatomic pathology, Dr. Hollenberg boasts visiting fellowships in dermatopathology from New York University Medical Center and Jefferson University Medical Center. After receiving his medical degree from New York Medical College, he completed his residency in clinical pathology at Cornell University Medical Center and in anatomic pathology at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. Dr. Hollenberg is currently a consultant in dermatopathology for North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset and a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Dermatology at Stony Brook University Medical Center. Often contacted by editors for his expertise, Dr. Hollenberg has written dozens of medical articles and has had his work published in various acclaimed medical journals and publications.

Acupath Laboratories, Inc. located in Plainview, New York, is an anatomic pathology and cancer genetics laboratory. <http://www.acupath.com>

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