



Delivering a **Healthy WA**



Solariums

Environmental Health Guide

What is a Solarium?

A solarium, also known as a sunbed, sun tanning unit, sunlamps, tanning beds, or tanning booths, is an electrically powered appliance or installation intended to produce tanning of the human skin by using ultraviolet radiation.

What is Ultraviolet Radiation?

Ultraviolet radiation or UVR is responsible for sunburn, skin cancer and eye damage. A solarium can produce concentrations of UV radiation that can be up to five times the strength of the midday summer sun.

The two main types of ultraviolet radiation are UVA and UVB. UVA radiation penetrates the deepest layers of the skin and may cause premature aging of the skin, including loss of elasticity, skin damage, eye damage, blotchiness and pigmentation.

UVB radiation penetrates the uppermost layers of the skin and is the main cause of sunburn, suntan, skin ageing, skin cancers and eye damage.

Should I Use a Solarium?

Many people often believe that solariums offer a safe tan. However, this is not the case. Exposing your skin to ultraviolet radiation produced from a solarium may increase your risk of developing skin cancers in the future.

What is The Minimum Age You Can Start Using a Solarium?

Evidence suggests that sunburn received during childhood and adolescence is linked to the development of melanoma and basal cell carcinoma (skin cancer) later in life. Helping prevent the adoption of sun tanning habits during adolescence is a high priority to reduce skin cancer risks and lowering the risk of developing skin cancer later in life

It is recommended that individuals under the age of 18 should not use a sun tanning unit. Person between the ages of 15 and 18 should seek parental or guardian consent before using a sun tanning unit.

Are There Any Regulations The Solarium Industry Must Comply With?

At present, there are no regulations governing the solarium industry. Standards Australia have developed the *AS/NZS 2635:2002 Solaria for cosmetic purposes*. The standard sets out guidelines for the installation, maintenance and operation of solarium and seeks to increase the safety associated with their use. However, it is only a voluntary standard.





How Will I Know If the Solarium Operator is Complying With The Australian Standard?

There are a few things you should look out for before using a solarium which are as follows;

- Make sure you sign and date a client consent form;
- Look for Health warning signs on the walls informing you of the risks associated with sun tanning units;
- Make sure you are given goggles to wear in the solarium;
- Make sure you are supervised while using the solarium;
- Before using a solarium make sure you are shown how to terminate the session automatically;
- Make sure the solarium is in a clean and hygienic condition.

When Should I Not Use a Sun Tanning Unit?

If you are skin type one or you suffer from any of the following conditions sun tanning should be avoided;

- Previous skin cancer
- Family history of skin cancer
- Pregnant women
- Back problems
- Diabetes
- Heart Condition
- Cold sores
- Migraine
- Epilepsy
- Allergies
- Eye infections
- Blood pressure
- Giddiness/fainting
- Kidney/urinary problems
- Hyperaction of the thyroid gland
- Family history of skin cancer

What is Skin Type One and Why Should People With Skin Type One Not Use a Sun Tanning Unit?

A Skin type 1 person is defined as;

- Someone who burns and does not tan when in the sun unprotected, and may have one or all of the following attributes:
- Very fair/white skin;
- Light Coloured Eyes;
- Lots of Freckles;
- Red hair.

It is advisable that a person with skin type 1 should not use a sun tanning unit. Skin type 1 people are more prone to erythema (skin reddening) and skin cancer as the pigmentation in the skin is low. Solariums will not have any tanning effect on skin type 1, as the skin is prone to burning.

Are There Any Areas of the Body That I Should Not Expose in a Solarium?

Sensitive areas of the body that lack protective melanin should be protected from over exposure to ultraviolet radiation in a solarium. Such areas of the body include;

- Under arms
- Nose
- Genitalia
- Ears
- Lips



What Precautions Can I Take to Protect The Sensitive Areas of the Body?

Extra precautions that should be used to protect sensitive areas of the body may include, but are not limited to;

- Sunscreens
- Clothing
- Towels
- Lip balm that blocks UV light
- Body lotions

What Should I do if I Experience Any Problems After Using a Solarium?

If you have experienced any problems after using a solarium, such as severe sunburn, you are advised to seek medical attention. It is recommended that you notify the Radiation Safety Branch from the Department of Health contactable on 9346 3317 who can investigate claims of misuse of radiation equipment.

Further Information

Cancer Council of Western Australia

or

Your local Environmental Health Officer

or

Environmental Health Directorate
Department of Health
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