

## Sunbed cancer risk for teens (Fri 18 Mar, 2005)

### WARM-UPS

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about WHO / sun tans / sunbeds / skin cancer / UV rays / tanning salons / fair-skinned people / wrinkles / ...Change topic / partner frequently to increase conversation.

**UV BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'ultraviolet (UV)'. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**SUN TAN:** In pairs/groups, talk about sun tans. Do they look healthy? Do you want one? Are tanning salons good? Is laying on a beach the best method? Do you worry about UV rays? Is a sun tan fashionable?

**KILLER SUNBEDS:** Decide whether you will be Student A or Student B. Students A get together and write down reasons why governments should ban the use of killer sunbeds. Students B write down reasons why sunbed use is a personal choice, like smoking. Role play a court case, defending your arguments and attacking those of the other side.

**SUN TAN OPINIONS:** In pairs/groups, discuss whether you agree or disagree with the following opinions:

- a. A sun tan looks supercool and healthy.
- b. What a waste of time and money for something that fades in a week.
- c. Governments are irresponsible in not regulating sun tan salons.
- d. There are risks, but it's a personal choice.
- e. White westerners are strange to want to change their skin colour.
- f. The fashion and cosmetics industry is to blame for advertising tanned skin as being healthy.
- g. There is enough public information for people to know the dangers.
- h. Parents should never allow their 13-year-old daughters to go to tanning salons.
- i. There are plenty of tan-in-a-bottle cosmetics that give you a tanned look.
- j. Sun worshippers are crazy.

## PRE-READING IDEAS

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'skin' and 'cancer'.

**TRUE FALSE:** Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. Sunbeds can be deadly. T / F
- b. There is no direct link between the use of sunbeds and cancer. T / F
- c. The ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun are stronger than those from sunbeds. T / F
- d. Sunbeds are more popular with men than with women. T / F
- e. An estimated 66 000 people die each year from skin cancers. T / F
- f. Fair-skinned people, where the sun tanning culture is strongest, are most at risk. T / F
- g. A benefit of UV light is that it makes your eyesight better. T / F
- h. Sunbeds should only be used under qualified medical supervision. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| (a) warned    | type           |
| (b) pose      | early          |
| (c) form      | fearful        |
| (d) emit      | present (verb) |
| (e) obsessed  | lightest       |
| (f) scary     | authorized     |
| (g) fairest   | pressed        |
| (h) premature | consumed       |
| (i) urged     | cautioned      |
| (j) approved  | release        |

**PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article:

- |                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) warned against             | form of skin cancer                   |
| (b) the risks they             | skin ageing                           |
| (c) exposure to                | supervision                           |
| (d) the most dangerous         | between the use of sunbeds and cancer |
| (e) there is a direct link     | the use of sunbeds                    |
| (f) scary                      | at risk                               |
| (g) most                       | pose                                  |
| (h) premature                  | diseases                              |
| (i) greater risk of infectious | statistics                            |
| (j) under qualified medical    | ultraviolet                           |

## GAP FILL

### Sunbed cancer risk for teens

**BNE:** A World Health Organization (WHO) press release has warned \_\_\_\_\_ the use of sunbeds, highlighting the risks they pose of developing deadly skin cancers. They particularly recommend teenagers avoid sunbed use, “It is known that young people who get \_\_\_\_\_ from exposure to ultraviolet will have a greater risk of developing melanoma [the most dangerous form of skin cancer] later in life.” Research proves there is a \_\_\_\_\_ link between the use of sunbeds and cancer. The press release warns that “some sunbeds have the \_\_\_\_\_ to emit levels of ultraviolet (UV) radiation many times stronger than the mid-day summer sun”. Despite this little-known fact, sunbeds remain very popular with young people, especially women. Teenagers have become obsessed with getting or maintaining a sun tan, which has become a very powerful \_\_\_\_\_ statement. Girls as young as thirteen go to tanning “top-up” salons in the misguided belief that a tan is healthy.

*against      capacity      burnt      fashion      direct*

The WHO offers some scary \_\_\_\_\_ for sun and sunbed worshippers. It estimates there to be “132 000 cases of malignant melanoma ... annually, and an estimated 66 000 deaths from malignant melanoma and other skin cancers.” It says fairest-skinned people, where the sun tanning \_\_\_\_\_ is strongest, are most at risk: Australians, New Zealanders, North Americans and northern Europeans. Other very real dangers include eye damage; premature skin \_\_\_\_\_ (wrinkles); and a reduction in the effectiveness of the immune system, which can lead to a greater risk of \_\_\_\_\_ diseases. The dangers are in fact so great that the WHO Assistant Director-General responsible for environmental health, Dr Kerstin Leitner, has urged governments “to adopt stricter controls on the usage of sunbeds”. She recommends their use “only in very rare and \_\_\_\_\_ cases ... under qualified medical supervision in an approved medical clinic”.

*infectious      statistics      ageing      specific      culture*

## DISCUSSION:

- a. What was interesting in this article?
- b. Were you surprised by anything in this article?
- c. Are you a sun worshipper?
- d. Do you love sunbathing?
- e. Do you love the sun?
- f. Are you interested in sun tans?
- g. Do sun tans on other people look healthy?
- h. Do you protect yourself against UV rays?
- i. Are you aware of the dangers of UV rays?
- j. Are you obsessed with anything (money, the size of your stomach, English ...)?
- k. What obsessions did you have when you were thirteen?
- l. What other unhealthy things do people do to follow fashion?
- m. Would you like to change your skin color?
- n. What do you think is the most beautiful skin color?
- o. Are you worried about getting wrinkles?
- p. Do you worry about cancer?
- q. Should governments ban the use of sunbeds?
- r. Did you like this discussion?
- s. Teacher / Student additional questions.

## HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information on the dangers of UV rays. Share your findings with your class next lesson.

**3. SEXY:** Imagine you are an advertising executive of a sunbed manufacturer. Write the copy for an advertisement linking suntans to a sexier image.

**4. MELANOMA:** Imagine you are a sunbed user and have just been told you have a melanoma. Write a letter to the manufacturer. Ask questions and demand compensation.

## TEXT

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**BNE:** A World Health Organization (WHO) press release\* has warned **against** the use of sunbeds, highlighting the risks they pose of developing deadly skin cancers. They particularly recommend teenagers avoid sunbed use, “It is known that young people who get **burnt** from exposure to ultraviolet will have a greater risk of developing melanoma [the most dangerous form of skin cancer] later in life.” Research proves there is a **direct** link between the use of sunbeds and cancer. The press release warns that “some sunbeds have the **capacity** to emit levels of ultraviolet (UV) radiation many times stronger than the mid-day summer sun”. Despite this little-known fact, sunbeds remain very popular with young people, especially women. Teenagers have become obsessed with getting or maintaining a sun tan, which has become a very powerful **fashion** statement. Girls as young as thirteen go to tanning “top-up” salons in the misguided belief that a tan is healthy.

The WHO offers some scary **statistics** for sun and sunbed worshippers. It estimates there to be “132 000 cases of malignant melanoma ... annually, and an estimated 66 000 deaths from malignant melanoma and other skin cancers.” It says fairest-skinned people, where the sun tanning **culture** is strongest, are most at risk: Australians, New Zealanders, North Americans and northern Europeans. Other very real dangers include eye damage; premature skin **ageing** (wrinkles); and a reduction in the effectiveness of the immune system, which can lead to a greater risk of **infectious** diseases. The dangers are in fact so great that the WHO Assistant Director-General responsible for environmental health, Dr Kerstin Leitner, has urged governments “to adopt stricter controls on the usage of sunbeds”. She recommends their use “only in very rare and **specific** cases ... under qualified medical supervision in an approved medical clinic”.

\* <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2005/np07/en/index.html>