



TANNING TRUTHS

Healthy Sun Habits: Tanning Handout, ages 11-13

Top Reasons Teens Tan:

1. To maintain a tan year round
2. For a special occasion such as a dance or prom
3. To get a “base tan” before summer or vacation
4. To relax or feel good

Dangers of tanning:

- Tanning from the sun, tanning beds, and sun lamps all have UV (ultraviolet) radiation that is known as carcinogens—increasing your risk of skin cancer by 75% for melanoma.
 - Carcinogens tend to cause cancer.
 - UV Radiations:
 - UVA rays cause Aging. This is invisible damage, and after many years of sun exposure, is difficult to reverse and builds up over time.
 - UVB rays cause Burning—or sunburn. This is a visible injury and damage you can see after a few hours. Some people may get tan instead of burn, but getting a tan or freckles is just a way for your skin to prevent your skin from even further damage.
- It can damage our immune system.
 - Our immune system is what helps fight germs and sicknesses.
- It can prematurely age our skin, making it look wrinkled and leathery or causing age spots.

Safer Alternatives:

- Spray-on or lotion tanners (self-tanners)

Safest Alternative:

- Love the skin you’re in and don’t tan.

Discussion Questions:

1. Looking at the top reasons for tanning, do you think they are good reasons considering the risks of tanning?
2. Clearly you can’t always avoid the sun—especially if you like going to the beach or being outdoors—so what are some ways you can protect yourself from the sun’s UV rays?
3. Is artificial tanning (using tanning beds/sun lamps) safer than tanning in the sun?
4. Is tanning a trend?

