

Tanning FAQs

For Tanning Salon Owners and Operators in New Brunswick

What is the purpose of the new Guidelines?

The Guidelines are intended to provide guidance and direction to salon owners, operators and staff in practices and procedures advocating health risk reduction and informed consent.

Why have the *Guidelines for Tanning Salon Owners and Operators* been developed in New Brunswick?

The Guidelines have been developed because:

- a) A recent review of studies by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has resulted in re-classifying the use of tanning beds to the highest cancer risk group, “Group 1” carcinogen. This means that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the use of tanning beds causes cancer.
- b) There is a lack of industry regulation in New Brunswick, where some other provinces/territories have laws governing the industry. Due to the scientifically proven increased risk of tanning bed use, it is appropriate to provide these Guidelines to salon owners and operators so that they may better protect their clients, create awareness of the health risks, and ultimately to reduce exposure and new cases of skin cancer.

Do I have to comply with the new Guidelines?

The *Guidelines for Tanning Salon Owners and Operators* are not legislated requirements. However, it is expected that tanning salon owners and operators in New Brunswick will respect and voluntarily adhere to the new Guidelines for the health and safety of their clients.

What if I choose to not comply with the Guidelines?

Over the next 12 months, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health will conduct audit-based inspections to assess industry compliance with the Guidelines. Based on the level of compliance at that time, it will be determined if there is a need for more formal regulation and legislated requirements of the tanning industry.

What causes skin color?

Human skin color is mainly due to melanin, a natural brown-colored skin pigment or color, and variations in skin color are mainly due to genetic disposition and are associated with sunlight. Melanin controls the amount of UV radiation that penetrates the skin. Darker skin has large concentrations of melanin and as such protects against exposure to UV light and skin cancer. Alternately, lighter skin with less melanin is not as protected to overexposure to UV light. (Wikipedia)

How does a tan occur?

A tan occurs when the skin creates and releases melanin for protection when exposed to UV radiation either from the natural sun or artificial through the use of a tanning bed or lamp. The more UV radiation the skin is exposed to, the greater amount of melanin will be produced giving a darker tan. UV A causes the release of preexisting melanin into the skin cells during exposure and is responsible for the natural tanning color. UV B causes increased melanin production (melanogenesis) during and after exposure thereby causing delayed tanning, sunburn, and an even darker skin color.

What is a photosensitizing agent?

A photosensitizing agent is any product that causes or may cause increased skin sensitivity to UV radiation, such as burning (or erythema) in a much shorter period of time than would normally be expected. Such agents may include prescribed medications, over-the-counter medicines, as well as a wide range of person care products. ([Health Canada Guidelines - Appendix D](#))

What are skin types?

There are 6 skin types that have been distinguished by T. B. Fitzpatrick (1975), a Harvard Dermatologist. These are listed in order of decreasing lightness:

Type	Name	Tanning behavior	Hair and eye color	von Luschan Scale
I	Very light, or "Nordic" or "Celtic"	Often burns, occasionally tans	Tends to have freckles; red, brown, auburn, chestnut, or blond hair; blue, hazel, green or grey eyes	1-5
II	Light, or light-skinned European	Usually burns, sometimes tans	Tends to have light or dark hair; blue, green, hazel, brown or grey eyes	6-10
III	Light intermediate, or dark-skinned European	Rarely burns, usually tans	Usually has brown hair; blue, green, hazel, brown, or rarely, dark brown eyes	11-15
IV	Dark intermediate, also "Mediterranean" or "olive skin"	Rarely burns, often tans	Tends to have black to dark brown hair or may have lighter hair; blue, green, hazel, brown or dark brown eyes	16-21
V	Dark or brown type	Naturally brown skin	Black hair; brown or hazel eyes	22-28
VI	Very dark, or black type	Naturally black-brown skin	Black hair; dark brown eyes, with minor variations	29-36

(Wikipedia)

What is the von Luschan Scale?

The von Luschan Chromatic Scale, named after its inventor Felix von Luschan, was a widely-used method of classifying skin color throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The scale consists of 36 opaque colored glass tiles representing a variety of skin colors which would be compared to a part of the subjects skin that would not be exposed to sunlight (i.e., under the arm). This method showed problematic as it was subjective giving inconsistent results and was replaced by spectrophotometry in the 1950's. Now, the more simple Fitzpatrick Scale is used consisting of only 6 skin types. (Wikipedia)

What does "informed consent" mean?

For the purposes of the Guidelines, informed consent means providing the client with sufficient information and explanation before he/she agrees, or gives consent, to receive the service of using the tanning bed while accepting the risks involved. Such disclosure of information will enable the client or patient to make an informed or educated decision. If the client or patient does not give consent, he/she will not receive the service.

What is a disinfectant?

A disinfectant is an agent that is applied to a surface to destroy pathogenic organisms. Chemical disinfectants are commonly used, of which there are various types. If using a chemical disinfectant, make sure that you use a disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A complete list of approved disinfectants can be found in Health Canada's [Drug Product Database](#).

What is a pathogen?

A pathogen is a biological agent that causes infection or disease to its host. A pathogenic organism may be a virus, bacterium, fungus, parasite or prion.

What types of infections can be spread through the use of tanning beds?

Aside from cancer risk and more serious health effects, bacterial skin infections may also be transmitted by tanning bed use. If a tanning bed is not properly disinfected between each use, there is potential for certain organisms to survive on the surfaces and cause infection to the next user. The risk of transmission increases when a user has a skin abrasion, no matter how small. Some examples of skin infections that may be transmitted by tanning bed surfaces are *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Klebsiella pneumoniae*. Eye infections can also result from the use of shared protective eyewear that has not been properly disinfected. One example is Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye.

What is a wavelength?

Ultraviolet radiation is transmitted in waves. A wavelength is the length of a complete wave cycle. Wavelength is measured in nanometers (nm), where 1 nanometer is equal to 0.000001 (one millionth) of a millimeter (mm). UV A consists of wavelengths of 320-400nm, UV B of 280-320nm, and UV C of 100-280nm. Shorter wavelengths produce higher energy.

If I have a tanning bed in my home, do I have to comply with the Guidelines?

If you have a tanning bed in your home, typically it is for personal use only. The Guidelines apply to those who own and operate a business to offer this service to the public. If you use the tanning bed in your home similarly and are not licensed to operate a business, it is recommended that you contact [Business New Brunswick](#) for more information. If you are not licensed and offer this service, you may also wish to consult with your insurance provider on this matter.