

# Tanning beds safe, Canadian chain says

Last Updated: Wednesday, July 29, 2009 | 6:23 PM ET [CBC News](#)

---



*Retailers dispute claims by health experts that tanning beds can cause skin changes that might lead to cancer. (Al Grillo/Associated Press)*

The president of a Calgary-based tanning salon chain says there is misinformation in a medical study that concludes tanning beds can cause skin cancer.

The Lyon, France- based International Agency for Cancer Research, or IARC, which is part of the World Health Organization, updated the cancer risk level for ultraviolet tanning beds based on research published Wednesday in the medical journal *Lancet Oncology*.

Based on the study, the WHO has called for stricter regulations on the use of tanning beds, suggesting people under the age of 18 should not to use them.

But Doug McNabb, the head of Canadian tan-chain Fabutan, said the study does not address UV dosage or skin type.

"If you're to take skin type 1 and 2 out of the equation, those being [people] with red hair and blue eyes and then reddish brown and brown eyes — if you take those out of the data — the number pretty much goes to zero in terms of the risk of a tanning bed as a carcinogen," said McNabb.

He said a well-trained salon employee would tell a client with a category 1 skin type not to tan. And those with other skin types would be warned to tan in moderate dosages.

McNabb added that he doesn't believe in mandatory age restrictions, saying a decision on whether those under age 18 could use a tanning bed should be left up to parents or guardians.

Experts this week upgraded the tanning bed risk level after an analysis of about 20 studies concluded that the risk of skin melanoma is increased by 75 per cent when people started using tanning beds before age 30.

Until now, only UVB radiation from solar rays was known to cause a genetic mutation.

Kathy Banks, chief executive of the Sunbed Association, a European trade association of tanning bed makers and operators, also disputed the classification of tanning beds as carcinogenic.

"The fact that is continuously ignored is that there is no proven link between the responsible use of sunbeds and skin cancer," Banks said in a statement.

Most people who use tanning beds use them less than 20 times a year, she said.

Note: The CBC does not necessarily endorse any of the views posted.

