

Amy Schlinger

I Wish They All Could Be California Boys

Males are becoming more interested in indoor tanning salons, and like most tanning bed users, are not aware of the health risks involved.

HARRISONBURG, VA- Five years ago, when tanning salons were women's turf, Tyler Levis would not have braved walking through the doors. But since he has noticed that more of his friends are doing it, he now goes one week out of every year. "I want to get a base tan before bathing suit season," said the 21-year old undergraduate business major at James Madison University. Being that there are so many tanning salons conveniently surrounding the JMU campus, Levis is able to get his tanning done easily. When he goes into the salons he has been a little embarrassed but said, "As I've seen more guys going in and out I don't feel as uncomfortable."

If attendance at salons is any measure, the term metro sexual- males who care a lot about how they look and present themselves to others- applies to students who reside at JMU. What used to be primarily used by women, one shop says more and more men have become clients. Cory Einhorn, the Area Manager for Reach Bum Tanning in VA has noticed an increase in the number of males that are tanning. He has been working with the company for five years, starting in New York where he managed two locations on Long Island. Tanning is considered to be about vanity for a lot of people and as more males care about their appearance in that way, they tan, and no longer see it as something that just girls do, he stated. Einhorn said that most of the males that use the Beach Bum Salon in Harrisonburg are college students. He also talked about how in areas such as New York, where there many beaches and big nightlife, a lot of people care more about their personal appearance and a lot more males are tanning there. Despite the increase of males tanning, neither men nor women seem to be interested in the dangers involved with

tanning.

The dangers of tanning are one of the most important things to know about before you go tanning. Dr. Kenneth Goldman of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery is one who feels that a person should really know what they are doing when they go tanning. He said that about half of all the patients that he sees in a week have skin problems related to the sun. Although tanning outside is worse for you, indoor tanning is still bad for a person, according to Goldman. “Because even though it’s a mild strength of ultra violent light, it is still ultra violent light,” he said. Goldman explained that UV rays are carcinogenic.

Ultra Violent A, which is found in tanning salons, is not as strong as Ultra Violent B. Both A and B are found in the outside sun. He also explained that with a tanning salon, there is no regulation of how often you go. Cumulative exposure can lead to skin cancer 20 years later. Unfortunately, the only way to get rid of skin cancer is to cut out the infected skin, leaving some people with multiple chunks of skin taken out. Goldman stated, “If a person refuses to stop tanning, they should try to be careful not to take in a lot of outside sun exposure, and they should get their skin checked by a dermatologist every couple of months.”

But, women and men evidently are not listening to medical opinions. Griffin Stanton, 22, an undergraduate business major at James Madison University, is one male who has gone tanning but doesn’t really know much about the effects. The only reason Stanton went tanning for a week over the summer was because it was free. “It can give you cancer,” he said. Again he did not know any specifics about why the lights can cause cancer. When he was asked if he would ever get a sunless tan, a spray tan that salons now offer as a healthy alternative to the UV lights, Stanton said he would not. “Cause honestly,” he said. “That is just not something for guys to get done.”

Jason Hughes, 25, is another James Madison University student who likes to go to the tanning salon. Hughes said, "I want to look as good as possible and it puts me in a good mood." When asked about the dangers of tanning, Hughes said he knew what they were, but they were the least of his bad decisions. This sports and recreation management major has been tanning for five years.

There are a few who do however, realize the bad effects of tanning and chose not to. Leanne Ashley is one James Madison University student who has. This 19-year-old, undergraduate art history major has never been tanning in a salon. "I would rather have taut beautiful skin when I am older rather than be tan now because I can use bronzer."