



Summary: Young people's sunbed habits 2023

In this report, the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of 15-25-year-olds regarding sunbed use in 2023 are highlighted, as well as the development of young people's sunbed habits from 2008-2023. The survey is based on a web-based questionnaire with responses from 1022 Danes aged 15-25. The survey is nationally representative in terms of sex¹, age and geographical region.

The full report is available in Danish here: <https://www.cancer.dk/om-os/udgivelser-og-rapporter/forebyg-kraeft/unges-solarievaner-2023>

For questions concerning the report – please contact pebl@cancer.dk

Young people's use of sunbeds

14 % of 15-25-year-olds have used a sunbed at least once in the past year. 11 % have previously used a sunbed, while 75 % have never used a sunbed. There are more young women than men that use sunbeds (20 % against 8 %). Even though there are still more women than men using sunbeds, the difference between the genders is much smaller in 2023 than in 2008. The proportion of young people who are sunbed users has decreased from 40 % in 2008 to 14 % in 2023, but when looking at the period from 2019 to 2023, the proportion of sunbed users has increased from 10 % to 14 %.

Debut in sunbed use

Among current and former sunbed users, 68 % were under 18 years old the first time they used a sunbed. 59 % were between 14 and 17 years old, while 9 % were between 9 and 13 years old. More women than men start by using sunbeds before they turn 18. 56 % state that they were with a friend or multiple friends the first time they used a sunbed, while 22 % were with their mother.

Reasons for use of sunbeds – and reasons to stop

Among current and former sunbed users, the majority indicate that the primary reason for using a sunbed for the first time was to get a tan. The same reason is stated by current sunbed users as a reason for why they continue to use sunbeds. Nearly half (48 %) of sunbed users would stop using them if they developed skin or melanoma cancer. Among former sunbed users, the majority mentions that they stopped using sunbeds due to the health risks.

Skin damage after sunbed use

32 % of current and former sunbed users have experienced sunburn after using a sunbed. 16 % have experienced skin rashes, and 29 % have experienced pigmentation changes/white spots after using a sunbed.

Spray tan, self-tanner vs. use of sunbeds

36 % of 15-25-year-olds have tried spray tanning or self-tanner at least once, with significantly more women than men having tried it (69 % vs. 13 %). 79 % of current sunbed

¹ The data is representative of gender in the two categories 'male' and 'female', but not for the category 'Other, please specify', which is why this group is not included in the sub-analyses distributed by gender. See Chapter 10 'Method' in the report for more information on this.



users have tried spray tanning or self-tanner one or more times, compared to only 31 % of those who have never used a sunbed. 36 % of 15-25-year-olds believe that sunbeds give the best tan compared to spray tanning and self-tanner, while 20 % prefer the tan from spray tanning and self-tanner. However, 52 % of 15-25-year-olds would prefer to use spray tanning or self-tanner over sunbeds. 61 % of 15-25-year-olds believe that self-tanner is healthier than spray tan and sunbed use.

Attitudes towards and knowledge about sunbed use

60 % of 15-25-year-olds believe that using sunbeds gives a nice tan. 43 % think that most 15-25-year-old Danes use sunbeds at least once a year, despite only 14 % having used sunbeds in the past year. 39 % consider sunbed use to be fashionable, while 31 % find it embarrassing. 13 % of 15-25-year-olds believe it is a good idea to use sunbeds before a sun vacation to prepare the skin for the intense UV radiation in southern destinations. 10 % think that using sunbeds once a month is not dangerous. 7 % believe that sunbed use only is harmful if you get sunburned, and 4 % think it is healthy to use sunbeds. 6 % believe that use of sunbeds is necessary to get enough vitamin D.

What information do sunbed users encounter when they go to a tanning salon

43 % of sunbed users have never been informed about the health risk associated with using sunbeds, and 63 % have never been informed that individuals under 18 should not use sunbeds. At the same time, 39 % have received information about health benefits related to sunbed use. Among current sunbed users, 19 % have seen the mandatory warning poster from the Danish Health Authority where they typically go for tanning, while 70 % have not seen it. This represents a significant decrease from 2021 when 37 % had seen the mandatory warning poster.

Attitudes towards an 18-year age limit for sunbed use

Over half (56 %) of 15-25-year-olds believe that no one should use sunbeds regardless of age, while 25 % think that individuals should be 18 years or older before using sunbeds. 76 % believe there should be an age limit of 18 years for sunbed use in Denmark, while 17 % do not think there should be an age limit. More 21-25-year-olds than 15-20-year-olds support an age limit of 18 years (83 % against 70 %). The proportion of 15-25-year-olds supporting an age limit of 18 years for sunbed use has increased from 64 % in 2013 to 76 % in 2023.

Young people's knowledge of the link between sunbed use and cancer

82 % believe that sunbed use increases the risk of cancer. More women than men believe that sunbed use increases the risk of cancer, and more former sunbed users think it raises the risk compared to current and never users. 22 % of sunbed users believe that their own sunbed use does not elevate their skin cancer risk because they use sunbeds so little. 4 % believe that sunbed use does not increase the risk of skin cancer.



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<https://www.cancer.dk/om-os/udgivelser-og-rapporter/forebyg-kraeft/unges-solarievaner-2023>

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