

Going For Gold

Teens React to Possible Changes in Tanning Law

By Anna Thole

Pale may be the new tan as legislators debate whether or not to ban teenagers under the age of 18 from tanning beds.

Senate file 40 would prohibit minors under the age of 18 from a tanning facility.

Julie Wilson, school nurse, discourages the use of tanning. "There really are no benefits of tanning," Wilson said. "It only causes skin cancer, premature aging, wrinkles, age spots and leathery skin."

Wilson said that research shows that 20 minutes in a tanning bed is as harmful as five hours in the sunlight and the risk of skin cancer jumps by 75 percent

with the use of tanning beds before the age of 30.

Michaela Downs (12) believes in the proposed law. "I wish it would have been in place when I was younger so I wouldn't have started (tanning) so young," Downs said.

Savanah Harbach (12) doesn't believe in the law. "It doesn't really apply to me because I have one at home," Harbach said.

Jessie Dudak (12), who works at Le Beach Bum Tanning, believes that if teenagers have to have a parent's consent, then maybe they aren't old enough to tan.

Senator Dan Zumbach, of Ryan, said tanning beds should be used carefully

and under adult supervision if the user is under the age of 18.

"If you are 18, I believe you should have full understanding of the health risks involved," Zumbach said.

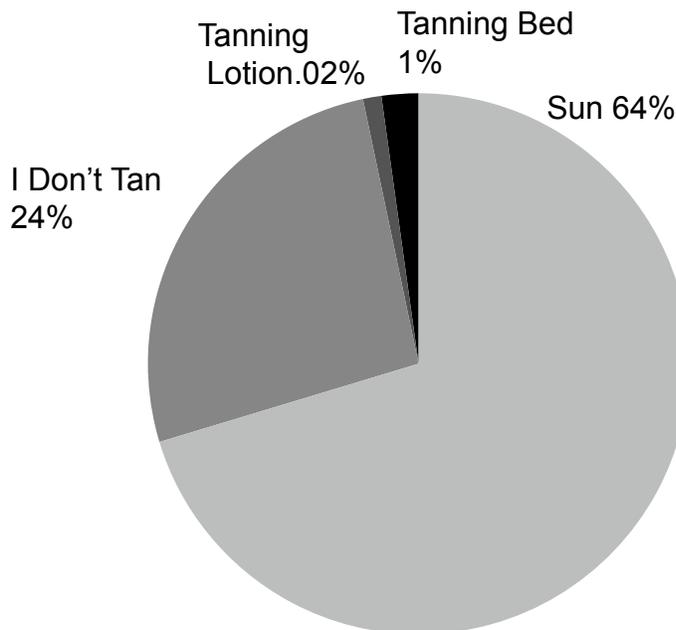
Students use the tanning beds for a variety of reasons. "I feel more confident being tan than being pale," Harbach said. It's "kind of like wearing make-up."

Michaela Downs uses the tanning bed twice a week in the winter. "I tan because it makes me feel better about myself," Downs said.

A variety of other methods are also available. These include spray tanning, lotions, or the sun.

Student Tanning Preferences

By Anna Thole



38%
of students surveyed
have tanned in the
past 12 months.

52%
of students
surveyed said 16-
18 year olds should
be allowed to tan.