

Tans in snowy winter's midst are clues to who visits salons

By MONA Z. KOPPELMAN

Ladies in your mother's bridge club.
Your sorority sister or dorm-mate.
Your boyfriend who's leaving you behind on spring break while he goes to Padre Island.
Brown, in the middle of murky March. Where do they get those terrific tans?
Given the present weather conditions, these bronzed beauties probably do as millions of others in the United States do — patronize tanning salons.
Stephen Schulz, manager at the Lincoln European Tanspa at 1120 K St., gave four reasons to tan

at a salon.

"It helps people feel better about themselves and look healthier," Schulz said. "It's especially nice to do this time of year when everybody has cabin fever."

He said older women often want a tan for cosmetic reasons, but the sun is too harsh for older skin. Salon tanning inhibits skin aging and also gives the self-conscious more privacy.

Second, Schulz said, a tan makes a person more attractive to prospective suitors. He said people who appear "sporty" have greater sex appeal.

Schulz's third reason was warm-weather vacations, like a trip to Hawaii, Mexico or the Caribbean.

"If you get a basic tan before you leave, you'll be able to stay out longer on vacation," he said. "When you want to don a pair of shorts, your legs won't look like milk bottles."

A European Tanspa brochure also cites certain health benefits of salon tans: general stimulation of blood circulation and increased resistance to infection and sunburn.

John Stroup, owner of Tanning Plus at 2710 S. 70th St., said some people tan at his salon to dry up acne and tighten stretch marks resulting from childbirth or weight loss.

Lincoln dermatologist Margaret Kontras Sutton said she doesn't think ultraviolet rays could have a drying effect on acne, since oil secretion, bacteria and hormones are contributing factors not influenced by topical ray application.

Sutton also said stretch marks result from loss of tissue underneath the skin — the dermis — and there is nothing ultraviolet rays can do to remove stretch marks.

Sutton said ultraviolet rays are recommended for treatment of some skin conditions, including psoriasis. The treatment is accompanied by medication and a strict exposure regimen.

All salon employees interviewed said college students make up most of their clientele. But Lisa Taggart, hair designer for Hair Express who operates Great Tan at 245 N. 13th St., said her salon's bread-and-butter customers are business people. Great Tan is open until 8 p.m. Monday through Friday to accommodate these people after work.

"During the summer, business people will be the bulk of our business," Taggart said. "They have to work 8 to 5 just like us. And they feel even more uncomfortable in the summer being white when everybody else is tan."

Schulz said he does a lot of "business business" during lunch hour and in the mornings before work. He said many come in for the relaxation as much as the tan. Schulz said his clientele includes male and female models, waiters and waitresses, lawyers, doctors, housewives, railroad workers and lobbyists at the Legislature.

Some people who don't tan easily have better luck in salons because of controlled time and light exposure.

Some salon operators claim large doses of Vitamin C can inhibit tanning and advise against such doses before going to salons. Not all tanning experts agree, however, saying tanning depends primarily on the amount of melanin in the skin and the type of light exposure.

Ultraviolet radiation falls into three categories — UVA, UVB and UVC.

UVC has the shortest wavelength and penetrates deepest into the skin. UVC rays penetrate to the collagen — or third level of skin — where cells form. UVC rays cause cell mutation and skin cancer. The earth's atmosphere naturally blocks out UVC rays from the sun and the Food and Drug Administration bans them down here on earth.

UVB rays are partly blocked by the atmosphere, but not entirely. These little devils are the ones that cause burning, peeling, blistering and premature skin aging. UVB stand-up tanning booths have not yet been FDA-banned, but the agency is working on it.

UVB rays also can penetrate to the collagen layer and cause skin mutations. UVB booths only allow exposures of about three minutes. Stroup at Tanning Plus said even that exposure can be dangerous — at the very least, causing burns or blisters.

UVC and UVB rays are particularly dangerous to fluids in the eye. The rays promote increased molecule action so the liquid behind the retina literally "boils." This boiling can detach the retina and cause temporary or even permanent blindness, Stroup said.

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