ADVISORY REPORT OF THE SUPERIOR HEALTH COUNCIL no. 9216

Recommendations on the use of artificial UV devices in Belgium

In this scientific advisory report on public health policy, the Superior Health Council of Belgium provides recommendations for the Belgian population on the exposure to artificial UV radiation (sunbeds)

This version was validated by the Board in June 2017
Recommendation

• The SHC recommends to ban the sunbeds and all artificial UVR devices that are available to the public, with the aim of reducing the risk for skin cancer.

• In the interim period to the effective ban of sunbeds, and also afterwards, in order to avoid a shift towards an increased exposure to natural UVR, the SHC further recommends to

• inform the general public in an objective and transparent way about the risks linked to UVR in general (and including the risks of UVR emitted by sunbeds), and about the rationale to ban the sunbeds.

• Moreover, it is also important to include objective information about the beneficial effects of casual exposure to the sun e.g. vitamin D production, in this information campaign.
What if sunbeds were no longer used in Belgium?

• Estimates of the effects of a total ban on sunbed use predict that this would result in the prevention of nearly 6,000 melanoma deaths over 50 years and reduce public healthcare costs by 238 million € in Belgium.
New: Royal decree

• The Ministry of Economy controls the exploitation of sunbeds
• Increases restrictions
  1. Signs that say Sunbeds increase your cancer risk
  2. People that use sunbeds will need a skin type certificate from a general practitioner
  3. A ban on communication of benefits of sunbeds
  4. An automatic ID card for every user in order to control age, usage, skin type, etc.
Reactions so far

- Press: lot of reactions. Say it is a serious signal. Discussion on how far can a government go to restrict free will
- Minister of Health: silence!
- Minister of Economy: no ban, afraid of parallel grey circuit and increase of private use, meeting the sunbed lobby and EU commission
- Parliamentarians: several parties supporting a ban
- Sunbed lobby: Ban the sun! We are doing everything to be compliant. Sunbeds are a controlled environment