



Sunbed habits of children and young people in Denmark 2011

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Danish title: "Børn og unges solarievaner 2011 – en kortlægning"

Summary

This report examines the sunbed habits of children and young people in 2011. The report is based on three surveys:

- "Børneindexundersøgelsen" (The Child Index Survey) with data from 1,416 children aged 5-14. The survey is weighted according to sex, age and region. Data was collected in August 2011.
- A survey with data from 1,888 young people aged 15-25. The survey is representative in terms of sex, age and geographic location¹. Data was collected in December 2011.
- A survey with data from mothers aged 40-50 with children aged 12-18. The survey covered 1,024 mothers and was representative in terms of age and region. Data was collected in December 2011.

Sunbed habits of children and youngsters aged 5-14

1% of children aged 5-11 and 4% of youngsters aged 12-14 have used a sunbed during the past year (see figure below). 3% of 5-14-year-olds expect to use a sunbed in the future.

One in five (20%) of the 5-14-year-olds do not know what a sunbed is. Half of the 5-7-year-olds (51%) do not know what a sunbed is.

Seven out of ten (70%) of the 5-14-year-olds believe that it is dangerous or very dangerous to use a sunbed, while one in five (21%) believes that sunbed use is less dangerous or not dangerous at all.

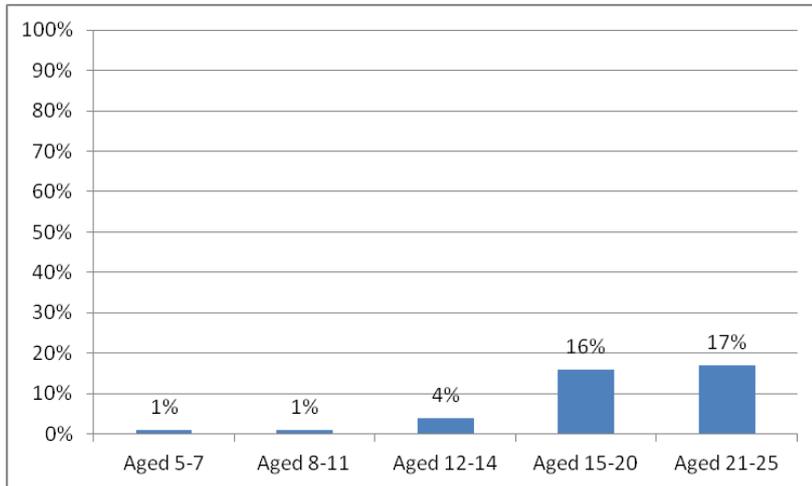
Use of sunbeds by 15-25-year-olds

16% of young people aged 15-25² have used a sunbed during the past 12 months, mostly girls (21%)

¹ East = Capital Region and Region Zealand, West = North Denmark Region, Central Denmark Region, Region of Southern Denmark.

² No significant difference between the proportion of 15-20-year-old and 21-25-year-old sunbed users.

Proportion of sunbed users among 5-25-year-olds, shown according to age



The proportion of sunbed users aged 15-25 has fallen from 41% in 2008 to 16% in 2011. The average age for first-time sunbed use among the 15-25-year-old age group is 15. Among girls, 61% start using sunbeds before the age of 15, compared with only 32% of boys.

The majority use sunbeds:

- in the autumn (51%) and in the winter (54%)
- in coin-operated unstaffed sunbed centres (84%)
- to get a tan (75%) and to feel more attractive (51%).

14% of young people aged 15-25 have used self-tanning lotion or spray tan during the past 12 months. In this group, 37% use sunbeds. By comparison, among young people who do *not* use self-tanner or spray tan, only 13% use sunbeds.

The most stated reason given by young people who do not use sunbeds for not using them is that they are concerned about the health risks (75%). Young people are particularly concerned about skin cancer and malignant melanoma. When compared to those who have never used sunbeds, former sunbed users state more often that they do not use sunbeds because they are expensive (31% compared with 21%) and because they are concerned about getting wrinkles (20% compared with 11%).

Plans for future use of sunbeds among 15-25-year-olds

13% of young people aged 15-25 expect to use a sunbed in the future, mostly girls (16%) and existing sunbed users (66%). The proportion of young people aged 15-25 who expect to use a sunbed in the future has decreased from 41% in 2008 to 13% in 2011. Among sunbed users who expect to use a sunbed in the

future, one third (32%) states that they intend to reduce their use. Among those who do not want to reduce their use, close to three out of four (71%) state that they would reduce or stop their use of sunbeds if they were affected by skin cancer or malignant melanoma, while 43% state that they would reduce or stop their use of sunbeds if a sunbed ban was introduced.

Risk perception of sunbed use among 15-25-year-olds

84% of young people aged 15-25 consider skin cancer a serious illness and almost everyone in this group (94%) knows that sunbed use increases the risk of skin cancer and malignant melanoma. However, one in three sunbed users (34%) believe that *their own* use of sunbeds is not harmful. 23% of sunbed users who use a sunbed at least once a month believe that their own sunbed use is not harmful because they use sunbeds so infrequently. Many young people believe that sunbed use is only harmful when they are used frequently. For example, one in ten (11%) believes that sunbeds have to be used weekly or more frequently to increase the risk of skin cancer.

Six out of ten (61%) young people aged 15-25 believe that there are benefits of using sunbeds. The benefits mentioned most often are "It puts you in a better mood and increases well-being" (26%), "It prevents/helps overcome vitamin D deficiency" (20%) and "It prepares skin for strong, regular sunshine" (19%).

Influence of friends and family (young people aged 15-25)

The sunbed use of friends and parents influences the sunbed use of young people. Among sunbed users aged 15-25, 53% state that some or all of their friends use sunbeds and 30% state that at least one of their parents uses a sunbed. Among non-sunbed users only 25% state that some or all of their friends use sunbeds and 9% that at least one of their parents uses a sunbed.

One in ten young sunbed users (11%) uses a sunbed without their parent's knowledge.

Over half (57%) of sunbed users aged 15-25 often or sometimes go with someone else when they use a sunbed, and the majority go with their friends (76%). The most common reason for going with others is that he/she/they also want to use a sunbed (81%) while 16% state that they go with others because they do not feel safe going on their own.

Mothers' attitudes towards sunbed use

15% of mothers aged 40-50 with children aged 12-18 have used a sunbed in the past 12 months.

99% of mothers strongly or to some degree believe that skin cancer is a serious disease, and 92% know that sunbed use increases the risk of skin cancer. However, one fifth (21%) believes that sunbed use has to be weekly or more frequent before there are health risks.

Slightly under half of the mothers (44%) believe that sunbeds offer health benefits; the majority of these mothers use sunbeds themselves (83%).

Over half (51%) of the mothers with children who use sunbeds accept their child's sunbed use; the majority of these mothers are sunbed users (72%). One in four (23%) of the mothers with children who do *not* use sunbeds state that their child is allowed to try sunbeds; the majority of these mothers are sunbed users (48%).

Awareness of the 'Turn off the sunbed' message

54% of young people aged 15-25 know the message 'Turn off the sunbed' from The Danish sun safety campaign. Awareness of this message in the 15-25-year-old age group rose from 43% in 2008 to 58% in 2010, whereafter it fell to 54% in 2011.

Attitudes towards a sunbed ban for under-18s

Two-thirds of young people aged 15-25 (65%) believe that there should be a ban on sunbed use for the under-18s. Among 15-17-year-olds who would be affected by such a ban, 62% are in favour. There are also many sunbed users who support a ban on sunbed use for under-18s: 55% are in favour of a ban and among sunbed users aged 15-17, 31% support a ban.

Eight out of ten mothers aged 40-50 with children aged 12-18 (78%) support a sunbed ban. This support has increased from 74% in 2009 to 78% in 2011.