

**Position Statement
on
Red Light Therapy at Tanning Salons
(Approved by the Board of Directors: August 12, 2023)**

Tanning salons advertise red light tanning beds and red light therapy devices as offering dermatologic health and/or cosmetic benefits. Currently, there are no peer-reviewed studies supporting these claims. It is important to distinguish these claims from red light phototherapy prescribed and supervised by dermatologists to treat some dermatologic conditions.¹⁻⁵ Distinctions between physician-prescribed and physician-supervised use of red light phototherapy and uncontrolled red light therapy at tanning salons include the following: 1) frequency of treatment; 2) duration of treatment; 3) purpose of treatment; 4) localized versus generalized use; and 5) device/equipment calibration and maintenance.

Red light is a form of infrared light; the main source of this type of light is the sun.^{6,7} Red light alone is not dangerous, unlike ultraviolet A or B, which have demonstrated numerous adverse effects in uncontrolled settings. Tanning salons are not medically controlled or physician-supervised settings; red light therapy devices in these settings may also emit ultraviolet radiation that can injure the skin and cause undesired results. More studies are needed on the safety and efficacy of red light therapy for dermatologic health and/or for cosmetic purposes.^{8,9}

The Academy does not support the use of red light therapy at tanning salons for the following purposes:

1. Improvement of dermatologic conditions without physician supervision
2. Skin tanning
3. Cosmetic reasons

References

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This Position Statement is provided for educational and informational purposes only. It is intended to offer physicians guiding principles and policies regarding the practice of dermatology. This Position Statement is not intended to establish a legal or medical standard of care. Physicians should use their personal and professional judgment in interpreting these guidelines and applying them to the particular circumstances of their individual practice arrangements.