Although there's awareness abound of the health risks involved with tanning, people still pay for the service.

"Adolescents and young adults in our culture tend to favor, in terms of making behavior choices, short-term outcomes as opposed to long-term goals," Gendle said.

The inherent focus on present image is reminiscent of a similar situation decades ago.

"A lot of what's going on with tanning in the U.S. reminds me of what was happening in the 80's when people really started getting clued in on the idea that cigarettes are really dangerous and we have to regulate them in some way," Gendle said. "I think it's bothering because most likely if you have a young adult who gets skin cancer it's because of tanning."

According to Vargyai, some tanning salons consciously attempt to reduce the risk factors of the practice.

"What I like about the tanning place I go to is that there's one place for the face and one for the body that you can turn off to avoid premature wrinkles," Vargyai said. "Most people are generally concerned about their face."

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