



Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA)

Melanotan-II

The Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) noted with concern the availability and illegal sale and distribution of a dangerous sunless tanning product (Melanotan II). CANSA would like to warn the public against this product. Melanotan-II is a dangerous laboratory-made chemical that is similar to a hormone found in humans called melanocyte-stimulating hormone (MSH). Care should be taken not to confuse Melanotan-II with melatonin.

Melanotan-II has been used to produce erections in men with erectile dysfunction (ED), and lately also to tan the skin without exposure to the sun (sunless tanning). Please refer to the **Fact Sheet and Position Statement on Sunless Tanning** for additional information about this dangerous product – The Fact Sheet and Position Statement on Sunless Tanning can be found on CANSA's website at www.cansa.org.za.

Melanotan-II is similar to a substance found in our bodies, called “melanocyte-stimulating hormone” (MSH), which increases the production of skin-darkening pigments.

Melanotan-II is thought to work on the brain to stimulate erections in men.

Melanotan-II is possibly safe when used under medical supervision for treating erectile dysfunction. There is, however, insufficient information to know whether it is at all safe for other uses. Adverse effects which may occur with the use of Melanotan-II include nausea, stomach cramps, decreased appetite, flushing, tiredness, yawning, darkened skin, spontaneous erections of the penis, and other side effects.

Cases of malignant melanoma (the most dangerous type of skin cancer) have been scientifically described following the use of Melanotan-II.

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not use Melanotan-II at all.

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