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## Skin Cancer Fact Sheet

### Incidence Rates



- More than 3.5 million skin cancers in more than 2 million people are diagnosed in the United States annually.<sup>1</sup>
- It is estimated that there will be about 131,810 new cases of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, in 2012 – 55,560 noninvasive (in situ) and 76,250 invasive (44,250 men and 32,000 women).<sup>2</sup>
- Current estimates are that 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.<sup>3,4</sup>
- By 2015, it is estimated that 1 in 50 Americans will develop melanoma in their lifetime.<sup>5</sup>
- Melanoma incidence rates have been increasing for at least 30 years.
- Since 2004, incidence rates of melanoma among whites have been increasing by almost 3% per year in both men and women.<sup>2</sup>
- Caucasians and men over 50 are at a higher risk of developing melanoma than the general population.<sup>6</sup>
- Melanoma incidence rates in Caucasians are 5 times higher than in Hispanics and 20 times higher than in African Americans.<sup>2</sup>
- Although before age 40, melanoma incidence rates are higher in women than in men, after 40, rates are almost twice as high in men as in women.<sup>2</sup>
- Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old and the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults 15-29 years old.<sup>7</sup>
- Melanoma is increasing faster in females 15-29 years old than males in the same age group.<sup>8,9</sup>

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- A 2005 study found that basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma are increasing in men and women under 40. In the study, basal cell carcinoma increased faster in young women than in young men.<sup>10</sup>

### Survival Rates

- Basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas are the two most common forms of skin cancer, but are easily treated if detected early.<sup>2</sup>
- Both basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma have cure rates approaching 95% if detected early and treated promptly.<sup>11</sup>
- The five-year survival rate for people whose melanoma is detected and treated before it spreads to the lymph nodes is 98 percent.<sup>2</sup>
- Five-year survival rates for regional and distant stage melanomas are 62% and 15%, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

### Mortality Rates

- Approximately 75 percent of skin cancer deaths are from melanoma.<sup>2</sup>
- On average, one American dies from melanoma every hour. In 2012, it is estimated that 9,180 deaths would be attributed to melanoma – 6,060 men and 3,120 women.<sup>2</sup>
- An estimated 3,010 deaths from other skin cancers will occur in the United States in 2012.<sup>2</sup>
- The World Health Organization estimates that more than 65,000 people a year worldwide die from melanoma.<sup>12</sup>

### Risk Factors

- The major risk factor for melanoma of the skin is exposure to ultraviolet light.<sup>2</sup>
  - In 2010, new research found that daily sunscreen use cut the incidence of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, in half.<sup>13</sup>
- Increasing intermittent sun exposure in childhood and during one's lifetime is associated with an increased risk of squamous cell carcinoma, basal cell carcinoma, and melanoma.<sup>14</sup>
- Exposure to tanning beds increases the risk of melanoma, especially in women aged 45 years or younger.<sup>15</sup>
  - In females 15-29 years old, the torso/trunk is the most common location for developing melanoma, which may be due to high-risk tanning behaviors.<sup>8,9</sup>



- People with more than 50 moles, atypical moles, light skin, freckles, or a family history of melanoma are at an increased risk of developing melanoma.<sup>2</sup>
- Melanoma survivors have an approximately 9-fold increased risk of developing another melanoma compared to the general population.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Prevention & Detection**

- Since exposure to ultraviolet light is the most preventable risk factor for all skin cancers<sup>2</sup>, the American Academy of Dermatology encourages everyone to protect their skin by applying sunscreen, seeking shade and wearing protective clothing.
- Warning signs of melanoma include changes in size, shape, or color of a mole or other skin lesion, or the appearance of a new growth on the skin.<sup>2</sup>
- Individuals with a history of melanoma should have a full-body exam by a board-certified dermatologist at least annually and perform regular self-exams for new and changing moles.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Cost**

- In 2004, the total direct cost associated with the treatment for non-melanoma skin cancer was \$1.5 billion in the United States.<sup>18</sup>
- According to the National Cancer Institute, the estimated total direct cost associated with the treatment of melanoma in 2010 was \$2.36 billion in the United States.<sup>19</sup>

Learn more about skin cancer at [SpotSkinCancer.org](http://SpotSkinCancer.org):

- [Dermatology A to Z: Basal cell carcinoma](#)
- [Dermatology A to Z: Squamous cell carcinoma](#)
- [Dermatology A to Z: Melanoma](#)
- [Skin cancer detection](#)
- [Skin cancer prevention](#)



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