



# Facts about Skin Cancer

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## What You Should Know

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States and rates are climbing. There are three main types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, also known as nonmelanoma skin cancers, and melanoma.<sup>1</sup>
- When detected and treated in its earliest stages, most skin cancers are highly curable.<sup>1</sup>
- Melanoma is responsible for most skin cancer deaths, though it accounts for less than 2% of all skin cancer cases.<sup>1</sup>
- The best way to detect skin cancer early is to recognize changes in moles and other skin lesions or the appearance of new growths on the skin or a sore that doesn't heal. Adults should thoroughly examine their skin on a regular basis. New or unusual lesions or a progressive change in a lesion's appearance (size, shape, or color, etc.) should be evaluated promptly by a physician.<sup>1</sup>
- Limiting exposure to the sun and other sources of ultraviolet light are the best ways to lower the risk of skin cancer. When outdoors, be sure exposed skin is covered – wear wide-brimmed hats and use sunglasses. Apply sunscreens with an SPF of 30 or higher to unprotected skin.<sup>1</sup>
- Teen girls and young women need to be especially careful, as melanoma is the second most common cancer in women between 20 and 29 years of age.<sup>2</sup>
- Protection is equally important during childhood, since severe sunburns in childhood may be associated with an increased risk of developing melanoma later in life.<sup>1</sup>
- Sunlamp products – In May 2014, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a final order that will require warnings on sunlamp products. Sunlamp products, which include tanning beds and tanning booths, emit UV radiation that may cause skin cancer.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, people who have been exposed to UV radiation from indoor tanning experience a 59 percent increase in the risk of melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer. This risk increases each time they use a sunlamp product.

- ✓ The order requires that sunlamp products carry a visible black-box warning on the device that explicitly states that the sunlamp product should not be used on persons under the age of 18 years.
- ✓ In addition to a warning placed on the sunlamp product advising that the product not be used on children under 18, certain marketing materials promoting sunlamp products and UV lamps must carry additional warnings and contraindications, including “Persons repeatedly exposed to UV radiation should be regularly evaluated for skin cancer.”<sup>3</sup>

## Risk Factors

- Risk factors for all skin cancers include: sun sensitivity, a history of excessive sun exposure - including sunburns, use of tanning beds, diseases that suppress the immune system, and a past history of basal cell or squamous cell skin cancers.<sup>1</sup>
- Risk factors vary for different types of skin cancer. For melanoma, major risk factors include: a personal or family history of melanoma, and the presence of atypical or numerous moles (more than 50).<sup>1</sup>

## Incidence and Mortality

- In 2012, 2,080 Michigan adults were diagnosed with melanoma, and in 2013, 393 individuals died from melanoma.<sup>4,5</sup>

- The American Cancer Society estimates that 73,870 men and women will be diagnosed with melanoma and 13,340 men and women will die (9,940 from melanoma and 3,400 from other non-epithelial skin cancers) in the United States in 2015.<sup>1</sup>
- The lifetime risk of developing melanoma is 2.4% among Whites and 0.1% among African-Americans.<sup>1</sup>

### **Stage at Diagnosis**

- 78.7% of all cases of melanoma were detected at the localized stage.<sup>6</sup>
- Approximately 93% of all people diagnosed with melanoma live at least five years. If detected at a localized stage, the five-year survival rate is 98%. If diagnosed at a distant stage, the five-year survival rate declines to 16%.<sup>1</sup>

### **References:**

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