

It's a Fact!



Facts About Melanoma From the Melanoma Research Foundation

- Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer. Every hour of every day someone dies from melanoma.
- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States.
- Melanoma is one of the fastest growing cancers in the United States and worldwide.
- Melanoma can develop anywhere on the body, including eyes, scalp, hands and feet.
- Melanoma is most common in men over the age of 50; in front of colon, prostate, and lung cancer.¹
- In ages 15–29, melanoma is the second most common cancer.²
- The incidence of people under 30 developing melanoma is increasing faster than any other demographic group, soaring by 50 percent in women since 1980.
- It is estimated that this year there will be 70,230 new cases and 8,790 people will die from melanoma.³
- The lifetime risk of getting melanoma is about 1 in 50 for whites, 1 in 1,000 for blacks, and 1 in 200 for Hispanics.³
- Melanoma can develop on anyone — no matter their age, sex, or race.
- The majority of melanoma is caused by exposure to UV light and sunlight.
- It takes only *one* blistering sunburn, especially at a young age, to more than double a person's chance of developing melanoma later in life.⁴
- Exposure to tanning beds before age 30 increases a person's risk of developing melanoma by 75%, and younger people who regularly use tanning beds are eight times more likely to develop melanoma than people who have never used them. Occasional use of tanning beds triples their chances.⁵
- The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) reclassified tanning devices into the highest cancer risk category (carcinogenic to humans).
- Unlike all other cancers, melanoma is visible on the skin, making it easier to detect in the early stages.
- Most melanoma is curable in the early stages with an over 90% survival rate.
- The most dangerous aspect of melanoma is its ability, in later stages, to spread to other parts of the body - most often the brain, lungs and liver.
- The best way to prevent skin cancer is to protect yourself from the sun:
 - Seek shade.
 - Cover up with clothing, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.
 - Avoid excessive sun exposure, especially between the hours of 10 am – 4 pm.
 - Use extra caution near water, snow and sand, as they reflect the damaging rays of the sun, which can increase your chance of sunburn.
 - Apply sunscreen with a sun-protective factor (SPF) of 30 or higher with both UVA and UVB protection. Reapply every two hours, even if it's cloudy, and after swimming or sweating.
 - Examine your skin often and take note of any changing or new moles.

There is an urgent need to improve the diagnosis and treatment of melanoma.

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REFERENCES

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²Cancer Epidemiology in Older Adolescents & Young Adults. SEER AYA Monograph, pages 53–57, 2007.

³American Cancer Society, 2011 Melanoma Skin Cancer Overview. www.cancer.org/acs/groups/cid/documents/webcontent/003063-pdf.pdf.

⁴Mayo Clinic, 2010.

⁵IARC *Lancet Oncology*, publication of July, 2009.