

Melanoma Fact Sheet

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



MELANOMA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

IT'S A FACT!

- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S.
- Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer.
- Every hour of every day someone dies from the disease.
- It is estimated that there will be 77,000 melanoma diagnoses and 9,500 deaths in 2013.
- Melanoma is not just a skin cancer. It can develop anywhere on the body – eyes, scalp, nails, feet, mouth, etc.
- Melanoma can develop on anyone – no matter their age, gender or race.
- Melanoma is one of the fastest growing cancers in the U.S. and worldwide.
- In ages 15-29, melanoma is the second most common cancer.
- The incidence of people under 30 developing melanoma is increasing faster than any other demographic group, soaring by 50% in women since 1980.
- It is most common in men over age 50 – even more than colon, prostate and lung cancer.
- 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.
- 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 8 times more likely to develop melanoma than people who have never used them. Occasional use of tanning beds triples their chances.
- The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classified tanning devices into the highest cancer risk category – carcinogenic to humans.
- The most dangerous aspect of melanoma is its ability, in later stages, to spread – most often to the liver, lungs and brain.
- The lifetime risk of getting melanoma is about 1 in 50 for Caucasians, 1 in 1000 for African Americans and 1 in 200 for Hispanics.
- Unlike other cancers, melanoma is sometimes visible on the skin, making it easier to detect in early stages.
- The best way to prevent melanoma is to protect your skin and perform regular skin exams. Also:
 - Seek shade when possible
 - Cover up with clothing, sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat
 - Try to avoid being in the sun between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
 - Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF of at least 30 and reapply every two hours
 - Examine your skin often and take note of any changing or new moles

All references can be found on the MRF's website at www.melanoma.org

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