

Facts about Skin Cancer

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What You Should Know

- Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers. There are three main types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma.¹
- When detected and treated in its earliest stages, most skin cancers are highly curable.¹
- Melanoma is responsible for most skin cancer deaths, though it accounts for less than 5% of all skin cancer cases.¹
- The best way to detect skin cancer early is to recognize changes in skin growths or the appearance of new growths. 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.¹
- Limiting exposure to the sun and other sources of ultraviolet light are the best ways to lower the risk of skin cancer. When outdoors, long clothing and hats are recommended. For sun-exposed areas, sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher and sunglasses should be used.¹
- Protection is equally important during childhood, since severe sunburns in childhood may be associated with an increased risk of developing melanoma later in life.¹

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.¹
- 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).

Incidence and Mortality

- In 2007, 1,925 Michigan adults were diagnosed with melanoma, and in 2008, 260 individuals died from melanoma.^{2,3}
- The American Cancer Society estimates that 70,230 men and women will be diagnosed with melanoma and 11,980 men and women will die (8,790 from melanoma and 3,190 from other non-epithelial skin cancers) in the United States in 2011.¹
- Skin cancer is more common among Caucasians. Incidence rates of melanoma are more than 10 times higher among Caucasians than African-Americans.¹

Stage at Diagnosis

- Approximately 91.4% of all people diagnosed with melanoma live at least five years. If detected at a localized stage, the five-year survival rate is 98.0%. If diagnosed at a distant stage, the five-year survival rate declines to 15.9%.⁴
- In 2007, 75.1% of all newly diagnosed cases of melanoma in Michigan were detected at the localized stage.³

References:

1. American Cancer Society. (2011). Cancer Facts and Figures 2011. Retrieved from: http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@epidemiology_surveillance/documents/document/acspc-029771.pdf
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4. SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2007. National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD