

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States.**<sup>1-5</sup> This fact sheet presents statistics about skin cancer for West Virginia and the United States.

### just the facts: *Skin Cancer in West Virginia*

- **Sunburns.** A survey conducted in 2004 found that nearly 40% of White adults in West Virginia had experienced at least one sunburn in the past year.<sup>6</sup> Sunburns are a significant risk factor for the development of skin cancer.<sup>4,7-9</sup>
- **New Cases of Melanoma.** An estimated 540 residents of West Virginia will be diagnosed with melanoma in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Melanoma is responsible for about 75% of all deaths from skin cancer.<sup>3,10</sup>
  - The rate of new melanoma diagnoses in West Virginia is rising faster than that of all other types of cancer except liver and bile duct—with an increase of nearly 5% each year from 2005 to 2009.<sup>11</sup>
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 70 people in West Virginia die of melanoma every year.<sup>12</sup>
  - The death rate from melanoma in West Virginia is the third highest nationwide—22% higher than the national average.<sup>12,13</sup>
  - Melanoma has the fastest rising death rate among West Virginians aged 65 and older—with an increase of nearly 3% each year from 2005 to 2009.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1-41</sup> All references can be found on the SunWise Web site at: [www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html)

### survivor story: *Hannah Trickett*

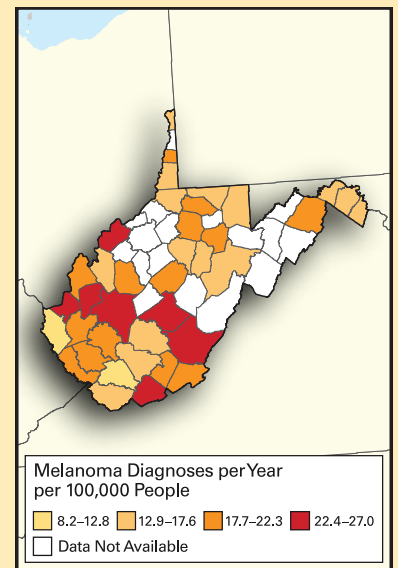


When I was diagnosed with Stage I melanoma in June 2006, I thought, “I’m only 20—this can’t be happening to me!” My mom had noticed a mole on my upper back that had a slightly darker spot in its middle. I had been going to the dermatologist regularly, so I didn’t delay in making an appointment to have the mole checked out. When the office called with the results, I immediately underwent surgery to remove the tiny mole (which left a 6 inch scar) and then had 3 lymph nodes taken out from under each arm. I have been cancer-free for 7 years now.

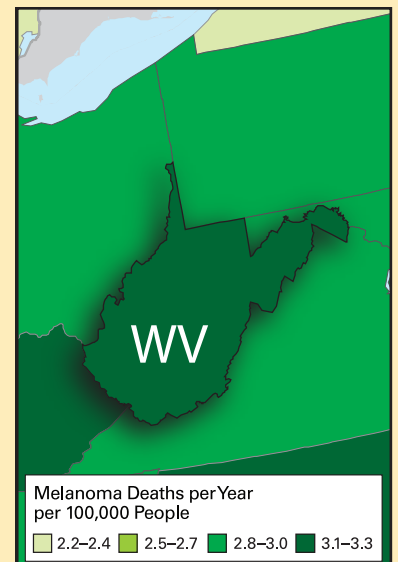
It is important for me to share my story—especially with other young women—and I’ve spoken at various health fairs, expos, and area high schools. As a teen and young adult, I would occasionally use tanning beds and I will forever regret it now that I am more educated on the risk of indoor tanning. Always remember to wear sunscreen and stay out of the tanning bed; tans fade but scars don’t!

*Hannah Trickett, a resident of Morgantown, WV, was 20 when diagnosed with melanoma.*

#### Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2005–2009<sup>11</sup> All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



#### Melanoma Death Rates, 2005–2009<sup>12</sup> All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



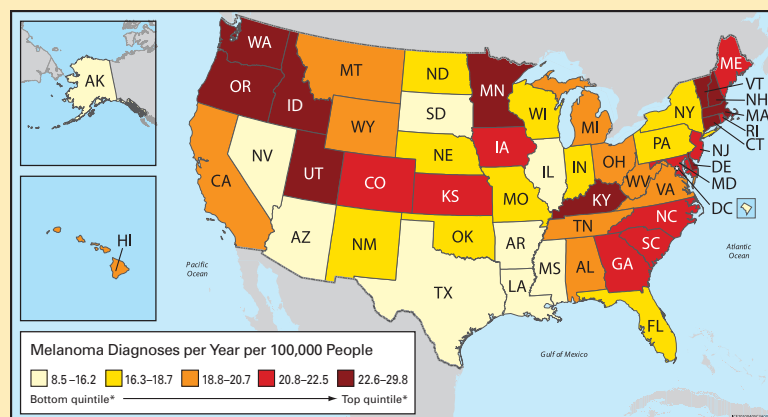
## The Cost of Skin Cancer

*In the United States, medical costs to treat melanoma skin cancer in 2010 were estimated at almost \$2.4 billion. These costs are projected to reach at least \$3.2 billion by 2020.<sup>14</sup>*

### statistics: *Cause for Concern*

- **More than 3.5 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year,<sup>2</sup> making it the most common of all cancers in the United States.<sup>1,3-5</sup> More people will be diagnosed with skin cancer in 2013 than the number diagnosed with breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancers combined.<sup>3</sup> More than 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetime.<sup>15</sup>**
- **One American dies of melanoma every hour.<sup>3</sup>**
- **Melanoma is the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death for young adults 25–29 years old.<sup>16</sup>**
- **For people born in 2009, 1 in 50 will be diagnosed with melanoma<sup>16</sup>—nearly 30 times the rate for people born in the 1930s.<sup>17</sup>**

**National Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2005–2009<sup>11</sup>**  
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages, Age-adjusted Rates



\* Please note that delays in reporting melanoma cases to cancer registries are more common since they are usually diagnosed and treated in non-hospital settings such as physician offices. States are grouped into quintiles based on rates of melanoma diagnoses. A quintile is a statistical “block” representing 20% of a total. Because data are available for 50 states and D.C., four quintiles include ten states, and one quintile includes eleven. For example, the eleven states with the highest melanoma rates—22.6 to 29.8 diagnoses per 100,000 residents every year—are in the top quintile.

### what works: *An Ounce of Prevention*

- **Unprotected exposure to ultraviolet light—a known human carcinogen—is the most preventable risk factor for skin cancer.<sup>7,18-23</sup> Taking simple steps as early in life as possible can reduce one’s risk.<sup>3-5,24,25</sup>**
- **Early detection of melanoma can save one’s life.<sup>26-32</sup> Skin examinations may be the best way to detect skin cancer early.<sup>3,33-37</sup>**
- **The CDC found evidence that education and policy approaches in primary schools (for children) and in recreational or tourism settings (for adults) can improve sun safety behaviors.<sup>38,39</sup>**
- **Student self-reported data<sup>40</sup>—collected as part of the U.S. EPA’s SunWise Program—showed that teachers using the SunWise Tool Kit for 1-2 hours yearly can spur increases in students’ sun safety knowledge and attitudes and small to modest improvements in short-term sun safety behaviors.<sup>41</sup>**
  - Using the data mentioned above, published modeling results show SunWise teaching between 1999 and 2015 could prevent more than 50 premature deaths and 11,000 future cases of skin cancer, saving the country more than \$30 million in medical costs and productivity losses.<sup>41</sup>

### skin cancer prevention: *Action Steps*

- **Do Not Burn.** Overexposure to the sun is the most preventable risk factor for skin cancer.
- **Avoid Sun Tanning and Tanning Beds.** UV light from tanning beds and the sun causes skin cancer and wrinkling.
- **Use Sunscreen.** Generously apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Reapply at least every two hours, and after swimming or sweating.
- **Cover Up.** Wear protective clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses with 99-100% UVA/UVB protection, when possible.
- **Seek Shade.** Seek shade when the sun’s UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Watch for the UV Index.** Pay attention to the UV Index when planning outdoor activities to prevent overexposure to the sun.

1–41 All references can be found on the SunWise Web site at: [www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html)