Office of Air and Radiation (6205J) EPA-430-F-13-027 November 2013

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

WEST VIRGINIA

Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States.[1-5] 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.[6] Sunburns are a significant risk factor for the development of skin cancer.[4,7-9]
- **New Cases of Melanoma.** An estimated 540 residents of West Virginia will be diagnosed with melanoma in 2013.[3] Melanoma is responsible for about 75% of all deaths from skin cancer.[3,10]
  - 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.[11]
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 70 people in West Virginia die of melanoma every year.[12]
  - The death rate from melanoma in West Virginia is the third highest nationwide—22% higher than the national average.[12,13]
  - 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.[12]

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

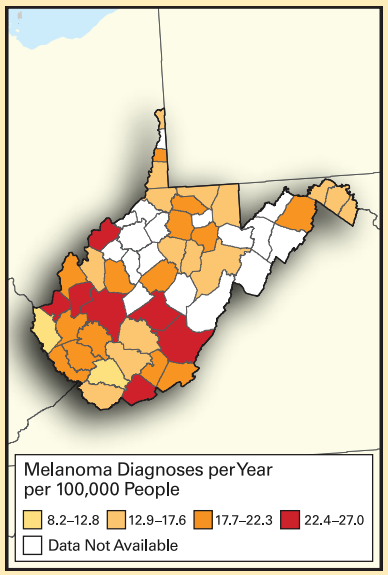
survivor story: *Amy Kelbaugh*

In October 2010, I noticed a mole by my right temple had become scaly and scabbed over. The scab came off in the shower, and the mole looked normal to me. My dermatologist removed and tested the mole "just to be on the safe side." A week later, I received a phone call with the test results: I had melanoma. My doctor scheduled a wide excision the next day. Though the results of the wide excision were negative for cancer, a year later I noticed a swollen lymph node near my ear. At first, my doctor thought it was from a recent sinus infection, but after the swelling persisted for two weeks, I had the lymph node removed and received a diagnosis of Stage 3 melanoma. My treatment has consisted of one year of interferon and multiple surgeries. Thankfully, subsequent tests have come back cancer-free, and I will continue to follow up with both my dermatologist and oncologist.

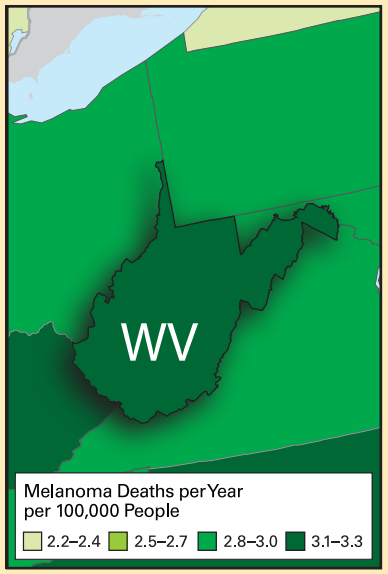
After two scary cancer diagnoses by age 35, I have now been cancer-free for almost one-and-a-half years. My grandmother had melanoma, and I had several sunburns as a child and as an adult before my diagnosis. Now, I always wear a hat and sunscreen outdoors, and I regularly reach out to family, friends and co-workers about the importance of sun safety.

Amy Kelbaugh is a resident of Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2005–2009[11]
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



Melanoma Death Rates, 2005–2009[12]
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



facts about: *Skin Cancer*

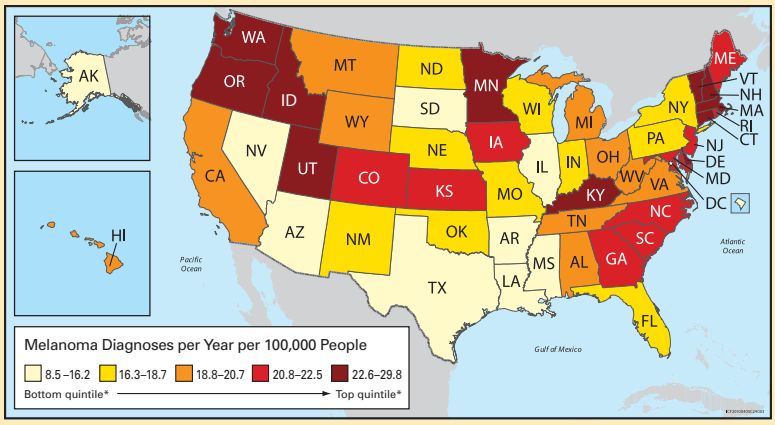
The Cost of Skin Cancer

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.[14]

statistics: *Cause for Concern*

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

National Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2005–2009[11]
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.**[7,18-23] Taking simple steps as early in life as possible can reduce one's risk.[3-5,24,25]
- **Early detection of melanoma can save one's life.**[26-32] Skin examinations may be the best way to detect skin cancer early.[3,33-37]
- 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.**[38,39]
- Student self-reported data[40]—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.**[41]
  - 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.[41]

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

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.