

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

## HAWAII

survivor story:  
*Raymond Kosaka*

I was first diagnosed with skin cancer in September of 2010. While getting a haircut, my barber noticed a discoloration on my scalp on the top of my head. I waited two months until my next semi-annual physical exam to have the area evaluated by a doctor. The result: Stage I melanoma.

As a teen, I spent hours in the summer sun free diving, and as an adult I've spent many years as a sport fisher, often with nothing to protect my bare head. Since being diagnosed with melanoma, I've undergone two surgeries—one by my dermatologist to remove the discoloration on my scalp, and a second by an oncologist to remove a larger area of skin. I've been "cancer-free" since.

I've made several changes since the diagnosis—I now wear a cap while in the sun and tell my family and friends to protect themselves at all times while outside. In addition, I've learned to take observations of others, like my barber, seriously, and to see my doctor immediately to have any skin changes examined. And of course, I made sure to send my barber a bouquet of flowers and to tip her generously!

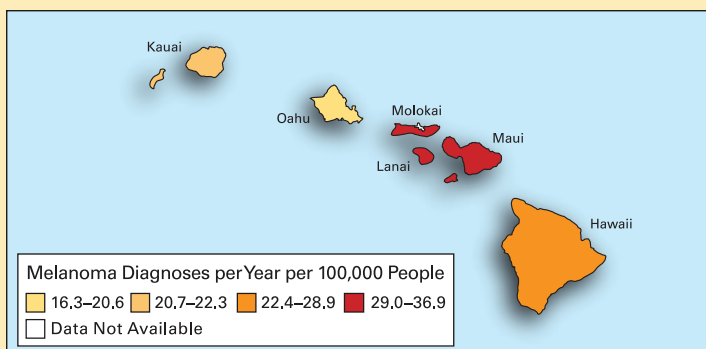
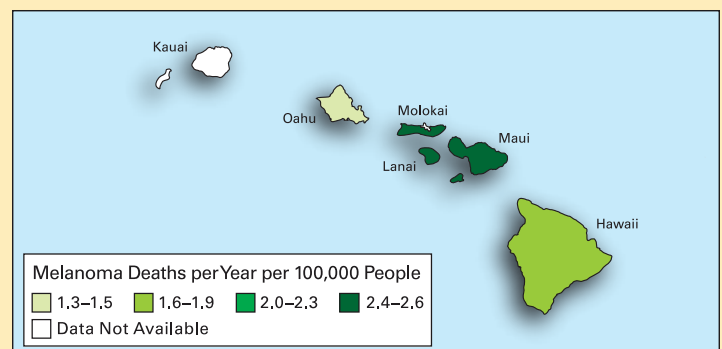
*Raymond Kosaka, a Honolulu, HI resident, was 75 years old when diagnosed with melanoma.*

**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 Hawaii and the United States.

**just the facts: *Skin Cancer in Hawaii***

- **Sunburns.** A survey conducted in 2012 found that more than 29% of White adults in Hawaii 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>4,7-10</sup>
- **New Cases of Melanoma.** An estimated 380 residents of Hawaii will be diagnosed with melanoma in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Although melanoma is not the most common type of skin cancer, it is the most deadly—responsible for about 75% of all deaths from skin cancer.<sup>3,11</sup>
  - Hawaii has the highest rate of new melanoma diagnoses nationwide among Whites, who are at the highest risk for melanoma. The rate of new melanoma diagnoses among Whites in Hawaii is nearly triple the national average.<sup>12,13</sup>
  - The rate of new melanoma diagnoses for men is rising faster than that of any other cancer—increasing on average by 4% per year between 2005 and 2009.<sup>12</sup>
  - The rate of new melanoma diagnoses in Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai counties is higher than the national average; in Maui County, the rate is nearly double the national average.<sup>12</sup>
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** Nearly 75 people died of melanoma in Hawaii between 2005 and 2009.<sup>14</sup>
  - Melanoma has the third fastest rising death rate among cancers in Hawaii.<sup>15</sup>
  - Hawaii is tied with Alabama for the highest death rate from melanoma nationwide among Whites. The death rate from melanoma in Hawaii was more than 30% higher than the national average in 2009.<sup>15,16</sup>

1-44 All references can be found on the SunWise Web site at: [www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html)

**Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2005–2009<sup>12</sup>**  
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages**Melanoma Death Rates, 2005–2009<sup>15</sup>**  
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages

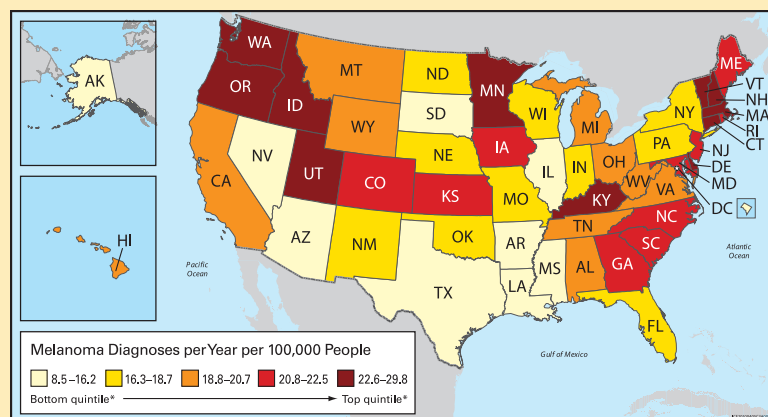
## The Cost of Skin Cancer

*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>17</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> Without a reduction in skin cancer incidence rates, about 1 in 5 non-Hispanic Whites will get skin cancer in their lifetime.<sup>18</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>19</sup>**
- **For people born in 2009, 1 in 50 will be diagnosed with melanoma<sup>19</sup>—nearly 30 times the rate for people born in the 1930s.<sup>20</sup>**

**National Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2005–2009<sup>12</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>7,21-26</sup> Taking simple steps as early in life as possible can reduce one’s risk.<sup>3-5,27,28</sup>**
- **Early detection of melanoma can save one’s life.<sup>29-35</sup> Skin examinations may be the best way to detect skin cancer early.<sup>3,36-40</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>41,42</sup>**
- **Student self-reported data<sup>43</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>44</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>44</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.

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