

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

## TENNESSEE

survivor story:  
*Colleen Radish*

For years I had a mole on my lower back. One day, I noticed a drastic change in the mole color—so black that it was almost blue. My doctor immediately referred

me to a dermatologist to have the mole removed and biopsied. When my dermatologist told me I had Stage I melanoma at age 24, I was both scared and shocked. I was worried about my future, since skin cancer runs in my family and I spent a lot of time in the sun as a child. In addition to the mole on my back, I had a pre-cancerous lesion removed from my face. Three years later, I was diagnosed with Stage I melanoma again for a different area on my lower back. Thankfully, I have now been cancer-free for five years!

I feel fortunate to be a melanoma survivor and have adopted lifelong sun safety habits. I limit my time in the sun, always wear sunscreen when outdoors, and encourage my friends and family to do the same. My best advice is to check your skin routinely for any odd moles and monitor for any significant changes over time.

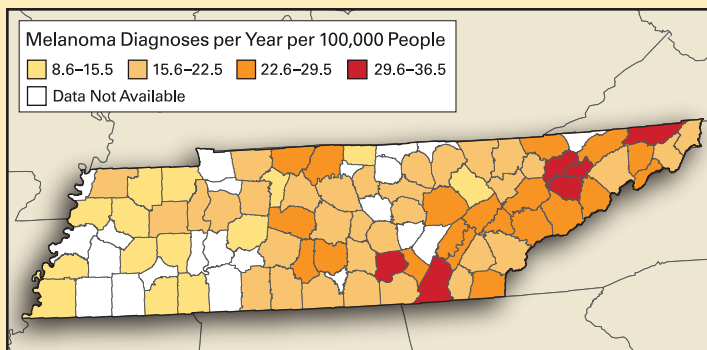
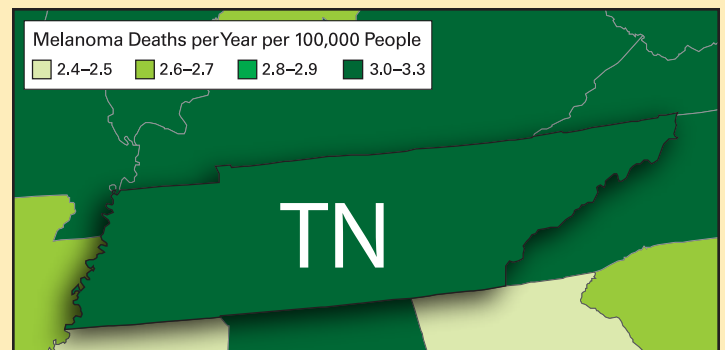
*Colleen Radish, a resident of Memphis, Tennessee, was 24 years old when she was first diagnosed with melanoma.*

**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 Tennessee and the United States.

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

- **Sunburns.** A survey conducted in 2004 found that 32% of White adults in Tennessee 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 1,900 residents of Tennessee will be diagnosed with melanoma in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Melanoma is responsible for about 75% of all deaths from skin cancer, with the remainder attributed to non-melanoma skin cancers (basal and squamous cell carcinomas).<sup>3,11</sup>
  - The rate of new melanoma diagnoses in Tennessee was slightly higher than the national average from 2005 to 2009.<sup>12</sup>
  - From 2005 to 2009, the rate of new melanoma diagnoses in Tennessee was rising faster than that of any other cancer among residents aged 65 and older, except liver and bile duct cancer.<sup>12</sup>
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 194 people died of melanoma in Tennessee every year from 2005 to 2009.<sup>13</sup>
  - Melanoma is one of just five cancers in Tennessee with a rising death rate. Among state residents aged 65 and older, melanoma has the fastest rising cancer death rate.<sup>13</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)

**Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2005–2009<sup>12</sup>**  
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages**Melanoma Death Rates, 2005–2009<sup>13</sup>**  
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages

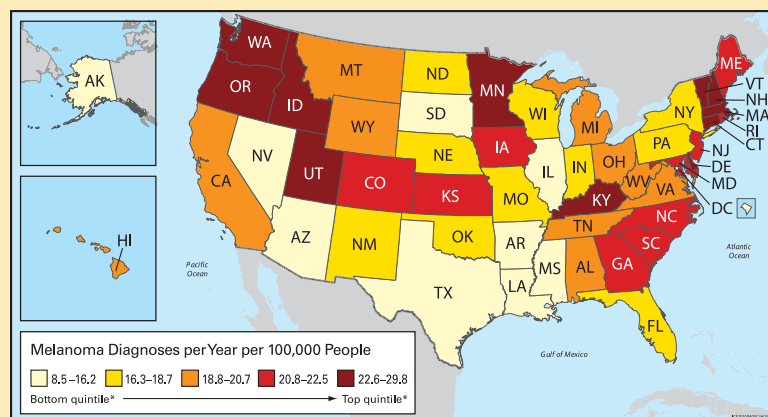
## The Cost of Skin Cancer

*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> Without a reduction in skin cancer incidence rates, about 1 in 5 non-Hispanic Whites will get skin cancer in 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>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>7,18-23</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.

<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)