

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

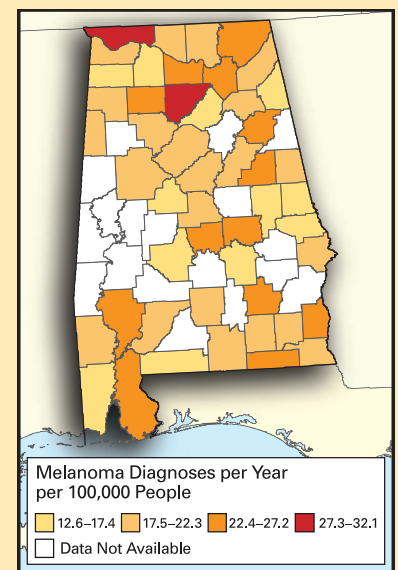
## ALABAMA

**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 Alabama and the United States.

### just the facts: *Skin Cancer in Alabama*

- **Sunburns.** A survey conducted in 2004 found that nearly 40% of White adults in Alabama 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 1,300 residents of Alabama will be diagnosed with melanoma in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Melanoma is responsible for about 75% of all deaths from skin cancer.<sup>3,11</sup>
  - From 2005 to 2009, the rate of new melanoma diagnoses among White residents of Alabama was higher than the national average rate for this group.<sup>12</sup>
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 156 people in Alabama die of melanoma every year.<sup>13</sup>
  - From 2005 to 2009, Alabama was tied with Hawaii for the highest death rate from melanoma nationwide among Whites, who are at the highest risk for melanoma.<sup>13</sup>
  - The death rate from melanoma in Alabama was more than 30% higher than the national average in 2009.<sup>13</sup>

#### 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



<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: *Stephanie Brumfield*



In April 2010, I noticed a small, scabbed mole on my forearm that would not heal. When I took my son to a dermatologist appointment, I asked about it. The doctor said the mole looked suspicious and immediately took a biopsy. The mole turned out to be malignant melanoma. I was shocked and terrified, and I called my husband and wept. I had surgery to remove the mole with wide margins, as well as a sentinel lymph node. Thankfully, the node biopsy was negative, and three years later, I am now cancer-free.

I used to be a frequent, year-round tanning bed user, and I even owned my own tanning bed. As a teenager, I often got sunburned from tanning outdoors without sunscreen. I disliked my fair complexion and became addicted to tanning because I always wanted to “have some color.” After my diagnosis, however, I stopped tanning and got rid of my tanning bed. Now I always use sunscreen and a hat or umbrella while in the sun. I urge people to practice sun-safety, including never using tanning beds and wearing sunscreen outdoors. I also encourage everyone to see a dermatologist regularly and have suspicious moles checked immediately—early detection of skin cancer is key for successful treatment. I am grateful that my melanoma was treated before it had the chance to spread.

*Stephanie Brumfield was diagnosed with melanoma while living in Alabaster, Alabama.*

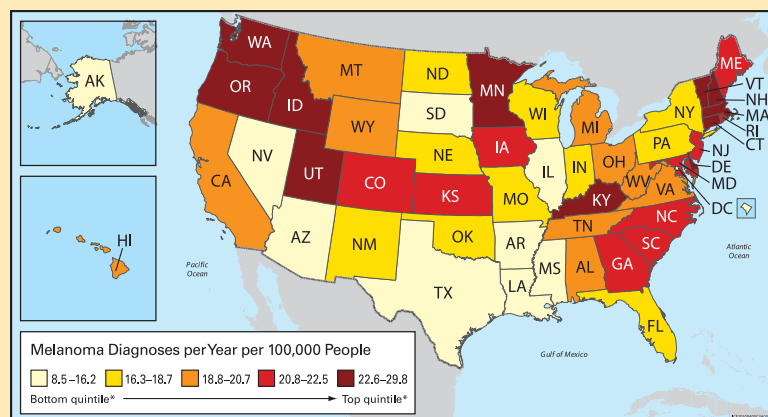
## The Cost of Skin Cancer

*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.

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)