

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

## NEW YORK

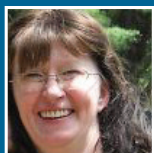
**Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States.**<sup>1-5</sup> This fact sheet presents statistics about skin cancer for New York and the United States.

### just the facts: *Skin Cancer in New York*

- **Sunburns.** A survey conducted in 2004 found that more than 40% of White adults in New York 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 4,200 residents of New York 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>
  - The rate of new melanoma diagnoses in New York is rising faster than that of all other types of cancer except thyroid and in situ breast.<sup>12</sup>
  - Warren County has the highest rate of new melanoma diagnoses in New York, 48% higher than the national average.<sup>12</sup>
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 459 people in New York die of melanoma every year.<sup>13</sup>
  - The rate of death from melanoma rose by 1% per year among male residents from 2002 to 2009.<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)

### survivor story: *Kimberly Springer*

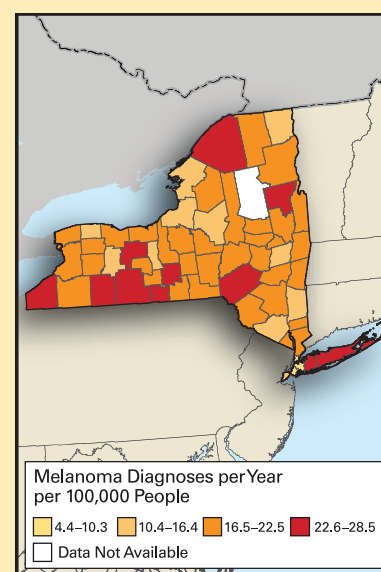


After my friends noticed a very dark mole on the back of my right arm, I immediately consulted my doctor and learned that I had Stage I melanoma. Seven years later, the cancer spread to my brain, right lung, liver, and adrenal gland. I was both scared and nervous. Skin cancer does not run in my family, but I got frequent sunburns as a child. I had to undergo multiple surgeries including an adrenalectomy to remove the cancer. At one point, the doctors were unsure if I would survive.

Thankfully, I have been cancer-free for three years! My doctors call me their 'miracle patient.' Since my melanoma diagnosis, I am more aware of my sun exposure. I always wear sunscreen as well as long sleeves and long pants when outdoors. I have also encouraged my sister to stop using tanning beds and have taught my children to be careful in the sun. My best advice is to check your skin often for new or abnormal moles and to consult your doctor immediately if you notice any changes.

*Kimberly Springer is a resident of Galway, NY.*

**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



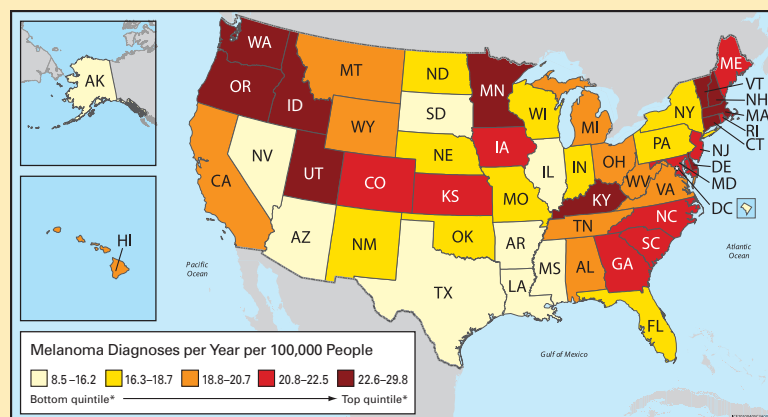
## The Cost of Skin Cancer

*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.

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)