Office of Air and Radiation (6205J) EPA-430-F-10-016 January 2011

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

ARIZONA

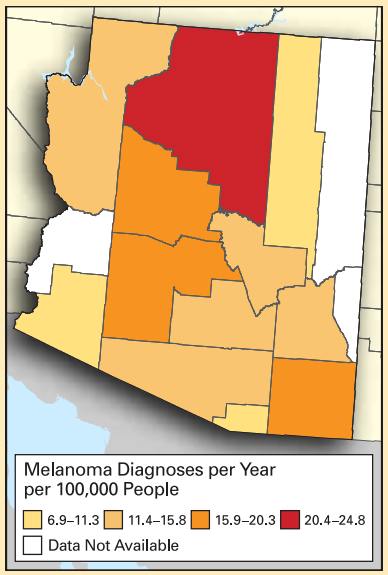
Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States.[1-4] This fact sheet presents statistics about skin cancer for Arizona and the United States as a whole.

just the facts: *Skin Cancer in Arizona*

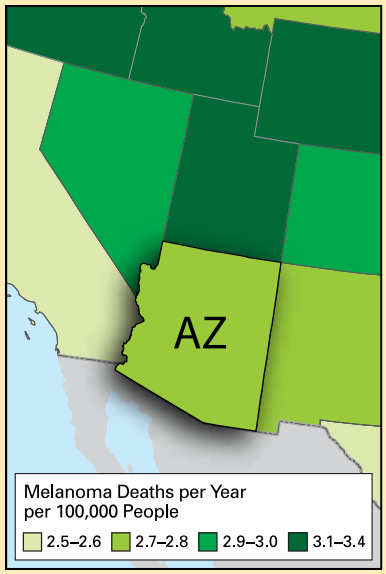
- **Sunburns.** A 2004 survey found that 42% of white adults in Arizona had at least one sunburn in the past year—an increase from 26% in 1999.[5] Sunburns are a significant risk factor for the development of skin cancer.[6-8]
- **New Cases of Melanoma.** An estimated 1,460 state residents were diagnosed with melanoma in 2009.[2] Melanoma is responsible for about 75% of all skin cancer deaths.[2,9]
  - The rate of new melanoma diagnoses is nearly 75% higher among men than women in Arizona.[10-11]
  - Coconino County has the highest rate of new melanoma diagnoses in the state—54% higher than the state average.[10]
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 171 people in Arizona die of melanoma every year. Since 1975, the melanoma death rate in Arizona has risen by an average of about 1% per year among residents over the age of 50.[12]
  - Gila County has the highest melanoma death rate in the state—70% higher than the national average.[12]

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

Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2003–2007[10]
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



Melanoma Death Rates, 2003–2007[12]
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



survivor story: *Sharon McKenna*

My battle with melanoma began in 2002 when my husband noticed a small, irregular mole on my lower back. After six months of unsuccessful medical tests to figure out why I was always sick and low-energy, I was anxious to see if this mole had anything to do with my constant sickness and fatigue. Soon after my biopsy, my husband and my mother sat me down to deliver the news: it was Stage II melanoma.

To date, I've undergone 28 biopsies and had three melanomas surgically removed. I've been melanoma-free since 2003, but have had nonmelanoma skin cancers since then.

Before my diagnosis, I spent a lot of time in the sun. As a child, I spent my summers tanning (and sunburning) and worked as a lifeguard. As an adult, my vacations were about sunbathing. I still had a visible tan line two months after my first melanoma surgery. But not anymore. I no longer sunbathe and now take precautions to protect my skin, like wearing sunscreen and sun-protective clothing and avoiding the midday sun. Discovering melanoma changed my life. I became an advocate for sun safety and found a new job. Take it from me: a tan is not a sign of health—it's skin damage!

Sharon McKenna works as a sun safety manager with the Arizona Department of Health Services.

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

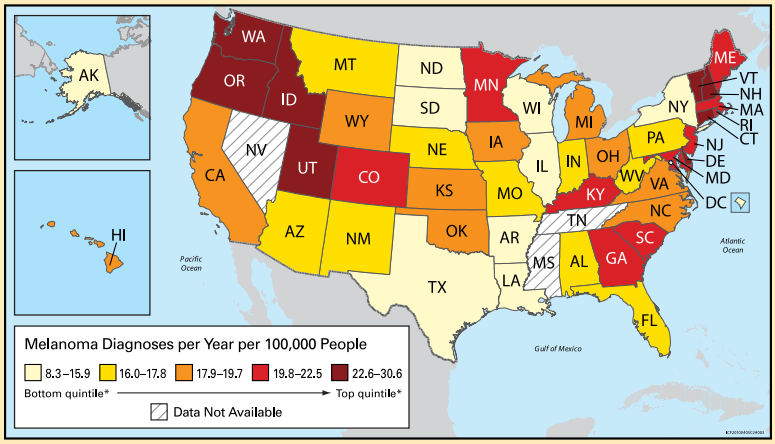
The Cost of Skin Cancer

In the U.S., medical costs to treat skin cancer are estimated at almost $2 billion annually.[13-14]

statistics: *Cause for Concern*

- **In 2009, more than 1 million people were diagnosed with skin cancer, making it the most common of all cancers.**[1-4] More people were diagnosed with skin cancer in 2009 than with breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancer combined.[2] About **1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetime.**[15]
- **One American dies of melanoma almost every hour.**[2]
- **Melanoma is the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults (15-29 years old).**[16]
- **For people born in 2009, 1 in 58 will be diagnosed with melanoma**[17]**—nearly 25 times the rate for people born in 1935.**[18]

National Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2003–2007[10]
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 setting 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 only 47 states and D.C., four quintiles include ten states, and one quintile includes eight. For example, the eight states with the highest melanoma rates—22.6 to 30.6 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.**[6,15,19-23] Taking simple steps as early in life as possible can reduce one's risk.[2-4,24,25]
- **Early detection of melanoma can save one's life.**[26-32] Skin examinations may be the best way to detect skin cancer early.[2, 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 15 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.