

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

## MICHIGAN

**Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States.**<sup>1-4</sup> This fact sheet presents statistics about skin cancer for Michigan and the United States as a whole.

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

- **Sunburns.** A 2004 survey found that 45.6% of white adults in Michigan had at least one sunburn in the past year.<sup>5</sup> Sunburns are a significant risk factor for the development of skin cancer.<sup>6-8</sup>
- **New Cases of Melanoma.** An estimated 2,240 state residents were diagnosed with melanoma in 2009.<sup>2</sup> Melanoma is responsible for about 75% of all skin cancer deaths.<sup>9,10</sup>
  - During 2006, 31.1% of all newly diagnosed cases of melanoma in Michigan had spread to other organs before detection.<sup>11</sup> If melanoma is detected after it has spread, the five-year survival rate is 15.9%.<sup>12</sup>
  - Grand Traverse County has the highest rate of new melanoma diagnoses in the state—higher than about 97% of counties nationwide.<sup>9</sup>
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 248 people in Michigan die of melanoma every year. Since 1975, the melanoma death rate has almost doubled.<sup>13</sup>
  - From 2002–2006, melanoma had the fourth fastest rising death rate among all cancers in Michigan.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1-43</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: *Ellen Simmons*



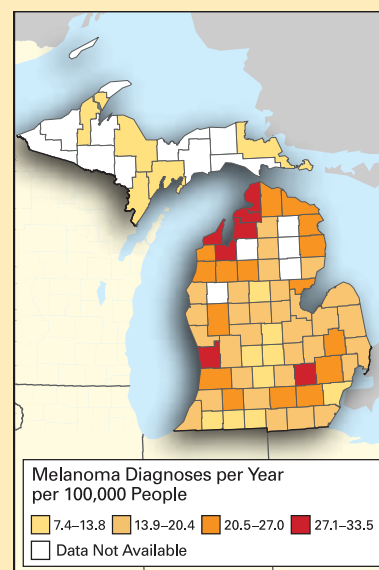
My battle with melanoma began when I noticed a dark mole on my thigh changing; it had irregular borders and bled occasionally. Three months later, I had the mole biopsied. The diagnosis shocked me: I had Stage III melanoma.

Even though I work with surgical patients, I was not prepared to hear that I had cancer. On the day I found out, I watched my young daughter perform in a play before I shared the news with my family. I remember watching her, wondering if I would see her graduate from high school. To remove the melanoma, I had a wide excision on my thigh and eight other moles removed; that was 14 cancer-free years ago.

Growing up on a lake in Iowa, I never wore sunscreen. A tan was important to me, and I often used tanning beds as an adult. I now know all too well the cost of a tan; it's not worth it. Today, I always use sunscreen and get a full-body check by my doctors every six months. If you catch it early, melanoma is a curable cancer. I often think how my prognosis might have been different if I had waited another few months to have my original biopsy. I am thankful every day for that decision.

*Ellen Simmons, a resident of Bath, Michigan, was 44 years old when she was diagnosed with Stage III melanoma.*

#### Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2002–2006<sup>9</sup> All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



#### Melanoma Death Rates, 2002–2006<sup>13</sup> All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



