Office of Air and Radiation (6205J) EPA-430-F-10-018 May 2010

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

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

just the facts: *Skin Cancer in Kansas*

- **Sunburns on the Rise**. A 2004 survey found that 41.4% of white adults in Kansas had at least one sunburn in the past year—an increase from 34.2% in 1999.[5] Sunburns are a significant risk factor for the development of skin cancer.[6-8]
- **New Cases of Melanoma**. The rate of new melanoma diagnoses—responsible for 75% of all skin cancer deaths—was 9% higher in Kansas than the national average from 2002-2006 and was the 18th highest in the U.S.[9,10] An estimated 610 state residents were diagnosed with melanoma in 2009.[2]
  - Among whites—who are at the highest risk for melanoma—Kansas had the 26th highest melanoma incidence rate in the U.S. from 2002-2006.[11]
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** Approximately 80 people in Kansas die of melanoma every year.[12] Since 1975, the melanoma death rate has risen about 2% per year among state residents over the age of 50.[13]
  - Among state residents over the age of 50 the melanoma death rate was about twice as high for males as for females in 2006.[13]

[1–42] All references can be found on the SunWise Web site at: www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html

survivor story: *Kristyn Gore*

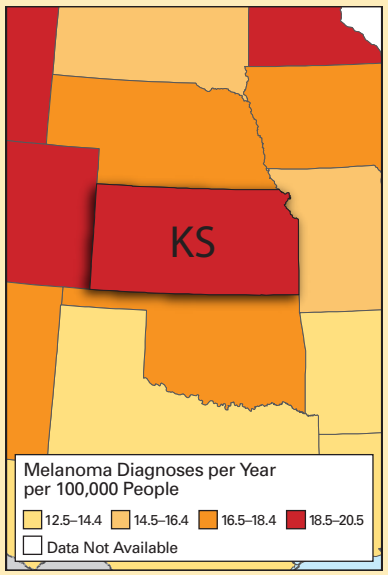
In 2007, not long after I got married, I noticed a small, pimple-like cyst on my neck. I didn't think much of it at the time, but after family members expressed their concern, I made an appointment to have it checked out. In the meantime, I found out I was pregnant. I was thrilled, but the very next week I received devastating news: I had Stage IV metastatic melanoma.

My husband and I were determined to treat the cancer while continuing my pregnancy, so during my second trimester, a surgeon removed the cyst and the lymph nodes in my neck and shoulder. After my son was born, I began radiation and then chemotherapy. Two more surgeries later—along with X-rays and PET scans every two months—the cancer cells were gone.

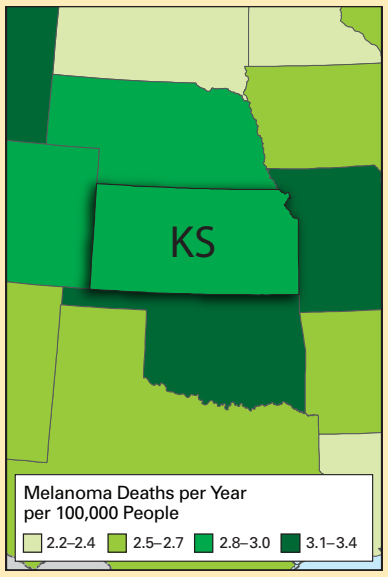
Now I always cover my skin and wear sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat when I'm outside. My son loves being outside, so I make sure he's safe from the sun too. Take it from me: if you notice skin changes on yourself or a loved one, don't wait to get them checked out.

Kristyn Gore was 25 years old when she was diagnosed with Stage IV melanoma.

Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2002–2006[11]
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



Melanoma Death Rates, 2002–2006[11]
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



facts about: *Skin Cancer*

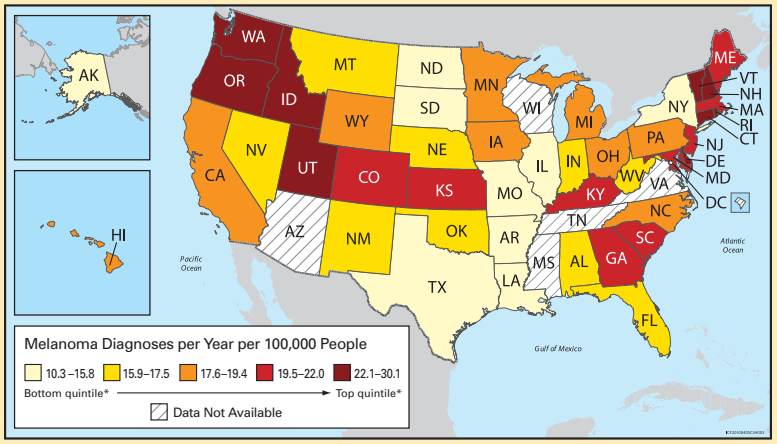
The Cost of Skin Cancer

In the U.S., medical costs to treat skin cancer are estimated at almost $2 billion annually.[15-16]

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.**[17]
- **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).**[18]
- **For people born in 2006, 1 in 53 will be diagnosed with melanoma**[14]**— nearly 30 times the rate for people born in 1930.**[19]

National Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2002–2006[11]
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 only 45 states, each quintile includes nine states. For example, the nine states with the highest melanoma rates—22.1 to 30.1 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.**[6,17,20-24] Taking simple steps as early in life as possible can reduce one's risk.[2-4,25,26]
- **Early detection of melanoma can save one's life.**[27-33] Skin examinations may be the best way to detect skin cancer early.[2, 34-38]
- 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.**[39-40]
- Student self-reported data[41]—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.**[42]
  - 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.[42]

[1–42] 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.