

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

KENTUCKY

survivor story:
Tabitha Danielle Buis

In 2005, my brother noticed a mole on my knee that looked like a picture of melanoma he'd seen at his dermatologist's office. I immediately went to see

the doctor and was diagnosed with Stage I melanoma. I had no idea how serious melanoma can be: I was only 17 years old.

I underwent an initial surgery to remove the cancerous mole and then a follow-up surgery to make sure all the melanoma was gone. I am so thankful that the cancer was caught before it spread. I've now been cancer-free for 4 years.

As a teenager I liked to be tan for special occasions and often used tanning beds before events and during the winter. Now I am much more aware of the importance of taking care of my skin. I don't go to tanning salons, and I always use sunscreen. I've also spoken out in support of a bill to monitor tanning bed use by minors in Kentucky. The bill was passed in 2006.

I hope that others can learn from my experience. Check your skin regularly and immediately report any suspicious spots to your dermatologist!

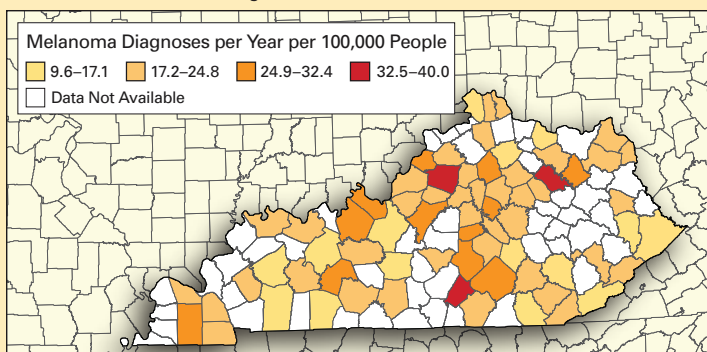
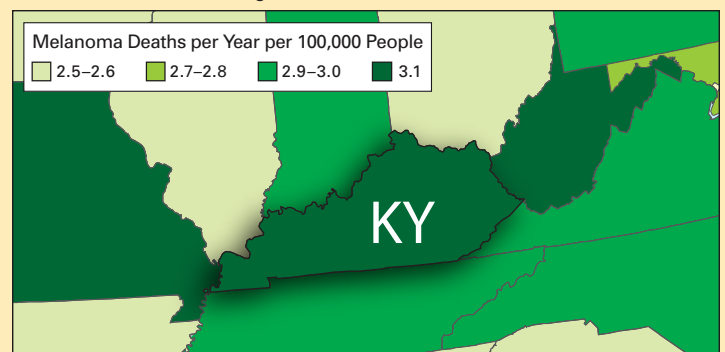
Tabitha Danielle Buis, a resident of Liberty, Kentucky, is active in spreading the word about melanoma prevention.

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

just the facts: *Skin Cancer in Kentucky*

- **Sunburns.** A 2004 survey found that 27% of white adults in Kentucky had at least one sunburn in the past year.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 14% higher in Kentucky than the national average from 2002-2006.^{9,10} An estimated 1,260 state residents were diagnosed with melanoma in 2009.²
 - Russell County has the highest rate of new melanoma diagnoses in the state and ranks among the highest 2% of counties nationwide.⁹
- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 136 people in Kentucky die of melanoma every year.¹¹ Kentucky had the 6th highest melanoma death rate nationally from 2002-2006—17% higher than the U.S. average.¹²
 - The melanoma death rate has increased about 1.6% per year among state residents since 1975.¹¹
 - Warren County has the 17th highest melanoma death rate among counties nationwide—81% above the national average from 2002-2006.¹¹

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, 2002-2006⁹
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages**Melanoma Death Rates, 2002-2006¹¹**
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages

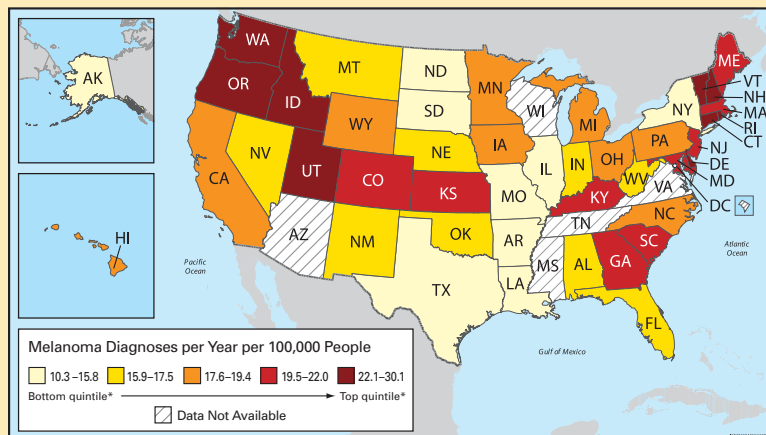
The Cost of Skin Cancer

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 2006, 1 in 53 will be diagnosed with melanoma¹²—nearly 30 times the rate for people born in 1930.¹⁷

National Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2002–2006¹⁸
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.**^{6,15,19-23} 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 data⁴⁰—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

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.

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