Office of Air and Radiation (6205J) EPA-430-F-09-066 May 2010

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control
Collaborating to Conquer Cancer

EPA

CDC
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

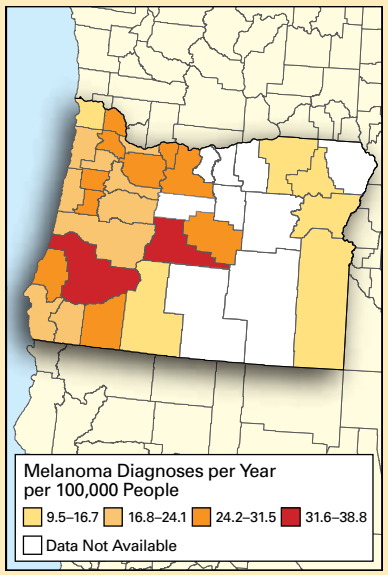
Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States.[1-4] This fact sheet presents statistics about skin cancer for Oregon and the United States as a whole.

just the facts: *Skin Cancer in Oregon*

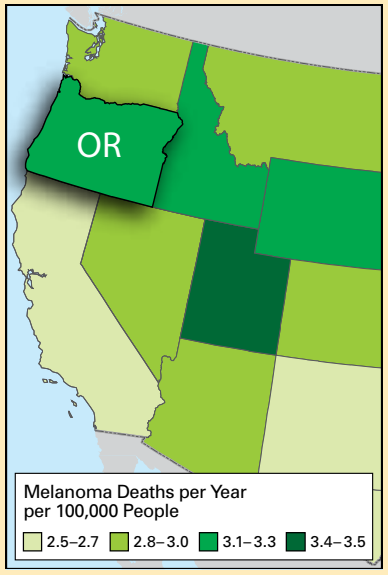
- **Sunburns on the Rise.** A 2004 survey found that 43.6% of white adults in Oregon had at least one sunburn in the past year.[5] Sunburns are a significant risk factor for the development of skin cancer.[6-8]
- **New Cases of Melanoma.** The rate of new melanoma diagnoses—responsible for 75% of all skin cancer deaths—was 36% higher in Oregon than the national average from 2002-2006 and was the 4th highest in the U.S.[9,10] An estimated 1,220 state residents were diagnosed with melanoma in 2009.[2]
  - Douglas 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 120 people in Oregon die of melanoma every year.[11] Oregon had the 8th highest melanoma death rate nationally from 2002-2006—17% higher than the U.S. average.[12]
  - Josephine County has the 5th highest melanoma death rate among counties nationwide, 107% higher than the national average.[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, 2002–2006[9]
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages



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



survivor story: *Pamela Clark*

Photograph by Justin Myers

In spring 2006, I noticed a suspicious mole on my thigh and pointed it out to my dermatologist. He told me the mole was normal, but after a week of staring at it, I still wasn't sure. I went back to my dermatologist and insisted the mole be removed. The mole turned out to be melanoma, which disappointed but didn't surprise me since I'd been diagnosed with cancer (Hodgkin's lymphoma) before. After the initial surgery, I had a follow-up surgery and have been cancer-free for three years.

As a serious surfer, I spend a lot of time in the sun, so it's especially important for me to cover up and apply sunscreen often. Since my melanoma diagnosis, I am much more careful about protecting my skin. I also encourage people to visit the dermatologist annually, but showing my gnarly scar seems to leave the biggest impression on women my age.

After undergoing treatments for Hodgkin's lymphoma, I learned that it's possible my melanoma was caused or enhanced by previous chemo and full-body radiation therapy. If you've received past cancer treatments, talk to your doctor about regular skin checks and the risks of sun exposure. It's also important to be your own advocate—if something doesn't look right to you, get it checked out!

Pamela Clark, a resident of Portland, OR, was 35 years old when she was diagnosed with melanoma.

facts about: *Skin Cancer*

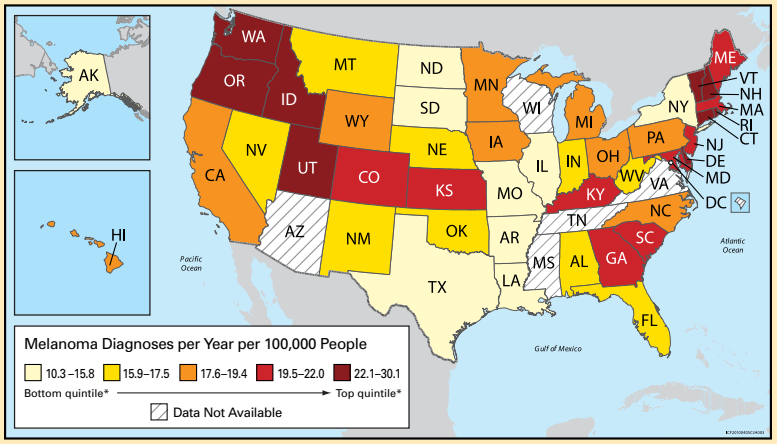
The Cost of Skin Cancer

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 2006, 1 in 53 will be diagnosed with melanoma**[12]**— nearly 30 times the rate for people born in 1930.**[17]

National Annual Rate of New Melanoma Diagnoses, 2002–2006[18]
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 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.