

Skin Cancer Fact Sheet

Most Americans do not consistently protect themselves from ultraviolet (UV) rays, whether from direct sunlight or artificial sources of light such as tanning beds. Sun-safe behavior can significantly reduce the chances of developing skin cancer.

In response to the serious public health threat posed by overexposure to UV radiation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working with schools and communities nationwide to reduce the incidence of skin cancer and other UV-related health problems. EPA's SunWise program teaches children and their caregivers about sun safety through the use of classroom-, school- and community-based components.

In Pierce County and Washington

- Washington State has the seventh highest melanoma incidence rate in the country.ⁱ
- In 2004, there were 2,611 new cases of melanoma reported in Washington, resulting in 196 deaths.ⁱⁱ
- In Pierce County alone, between 2001 and 2003, 214 new cases of melanoma were diagnosed, resulting in 13 deaths.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Melanoma is the fifth leading cause of cancer in Washington State.^{iv}
- More than 400 K-8 schools in Washington State are registered to use SunWise.

The Need for Sun Safety Awareness

- Nearly half of all cancers are skin cancers.^v
- ONE:
 - ... in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.^{vi}
 - ... American dies of melanoma nearly every hour (every 65 minutes).^{vii}
 - ... in 59 men and women will be diagnosed with melanoma during their lifetime.^{viii}
- More than one million cases of non-melanoma skin cancer are expected to be diagnosed this year.^{ix}
- Skin damage from the sun is cumulative.
- Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers. Melanoma accounts for about three percent of skin cancer cases, but it causes the most skin cancer deaths.^x

- Continued -

Melanoma on the Rise

▪ MELANOMA:

... is the most serious form of skin cancer and one of the fastest growing types of cancer in the United States.^{xi}

... is the second most common cancer in women between ages 20-39.^{xii}

... will make up approximately 108,230 new cases of skin cancer diagnoses this year in the U.S. More than half will be malignant, resulting in 8,110 deaths.^{xiii}

... rates have increased by 690 percent from 1950 to 2001, which means one in 33 Americans have a lifetime risk of developing melanoma today.^{xiv}

Dangers of UV Exposure

- Approximately 65-90 percent of melanomas are caused by exposure to ultraviolet light or sunlight.^{xv}
- Five or more sunburns within a lifetime double your risk of developing skin cancer.^{xvi}

NOTES

ⁱ State Cancer Profiles, National Cancer Institute. <http://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov> (accessed 4/26/2007)

ⁱⁱ Washington State Cancer Registry, Department of Health, December 2004. <http://www3.doh.wa.gov/WSCR/ASP/WSCRfacts.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ Washington State Cancer Registry – County by County, Department of Health, December 2004
<http://www3.doh.wa.gov/WSCR/PDF/03REPORT/CancerByCountyTables03.pdf>

^{iv} Washington State Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan, 2004-2008. http://www.doh.wa.gov/ccp/pdf/WSCCC_plan.pdf

^v National Cancer Institute, 2007 SEER Database. <http://www.skincancer.org/skincancer-facts.php>

^{vi} American Cancer Society's Skin Cancer Facts.

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/ped_7_1_What_You_Need_To_Know_About_Skin_Cancer.asp

^{vii} Skin Cancer Net, The American Academy of Dermatology, 2007 Melanoma Cancer Fact Sheet, 2007.

<http://www.aad.org/aad/Newsroom/2007+Melanoma+Fact+Sheet.htm>

^{viii} National Cancer Institute, 2007 SEER Database. <http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/melan.html>

^{ix} National Cancer Institute, 2007 SEER Database. <http://www.skincancer.org/skincancer-facts.php>

^x American Cancer Society, Overview. Skin Cancer, Melanoma, 2006.

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_2_1X_How_many_people_get_melanoma_skin_cancer_50.asp?sitearea=

^{xi} The Skin Cancer Foundation – Facts. <http://www.skincancer.org/melanoma/index.php>

^{xii} National Cancer Institute, 2007 SEER Database. <http://www.skincancer.org/skincancer-facts.php>

^{xiii} American Cancer Society's 2007 Facts and Figures. <http://www.aad.org/aad/Newsroom/2007+Skin+Cancer+Fact+Sheet.htm>

^{xiv} The Burden of Skin Diseases 2004, Copyright 2006, the Society for Investigative Dermatology and the American Academy of Dermatology Association. <http://www.aad.org/aad/Newsroom/2007+Skin+Cancer+Fact+Sheet.htm>

^{xv} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer. *MMWR* 2002; 51 (No. RR-4):1-16. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5104a1.htm>

^{xvi} Pfahlberg A, Kolmel KF, Gefeller O. Adult vs. childhood susceptibility to melanoma: Is there a difference? *Arch Dermatol*, Sep 2002; 138: 1234 - 1235. <http://www.aad.org/aad/Newsroom/2007+Skin+Cancer+Fact+Sheet.htm>