

About Skin Cancer

Estimated new cases and deaths from skin cancer in the United States in 2017

New cases: 87,110

Deaths: 9,730

Skin cancer represents 1.6% of all cancer deaths in the U.S.

Skin cancer forms in tissues of the skin. There are several types of skin cancer. Skin cancer that forms in melanocytes (skin cells that make pigment) is called melanoma. Skin cancer that forms in basal cells (small, round cells in the base of the outer layer of skin) is called basal cell carcinoma. Skin cancer that forms in squamous cells (flat cells that form the surface of the skin) is called squamous cell carcinoma. Skin cancer that forms in neuroendocrine cells (cells that release hormones in response to signals from the nervous system) is called neuroendocrine carcinoma of the skin.

Skin cancer is the most commonly occurring cancer in the United States. Basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma (nonmelanoma skin cancer) are the most common forms of skin cancer, but are easier to cure than melanoma.

Prevention

People with skin cancer are at risk of developing another skin cancer. Limit your time in the sun and stay away from sun-lamps and tanning booths. Keep in mind that getting a tan may increase your risk of developing another skin cancer.

The best way to prevent skin cancer is to protect yourself from the sun:

- Avoid outdoor activities during the middle of the day. The sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. When you must be outdoors, seek shade when you can.
- Protect yourself from the sun's rays reflected by sand, water, snow, ice, and pavement. The sun's rays can go through light clothing, windshields, windows, and clouds.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants. Tightly woven fabrics are best.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim all around that shades your face, neck, and ears. Keep in mind that baseball caps and some sun visors protect only parts of your skin.
- Wear sunglasses that absorb UV radiation to protect the skin around your eyes.
- Use sunscreen lotions with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. (Some doctors will suggest using a lotion with an SPF of at least 30.) Apply the product's recommended amount to uncovered skin 30 minutes before going outside, and apply again every two hours or after swimming or sweating.

Sunscreen lotions may help prevent some skin cancers. It's important to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion that filters both UVB and UVA radiation. But you still need to avoid the sun during the middle of the day and wear clothing to protect your skin.

***Early detection of melanoma can save your life.
Carefully examine all of your skin once a month.
A new or changing skin lesion in an adult
should be evaluated.***