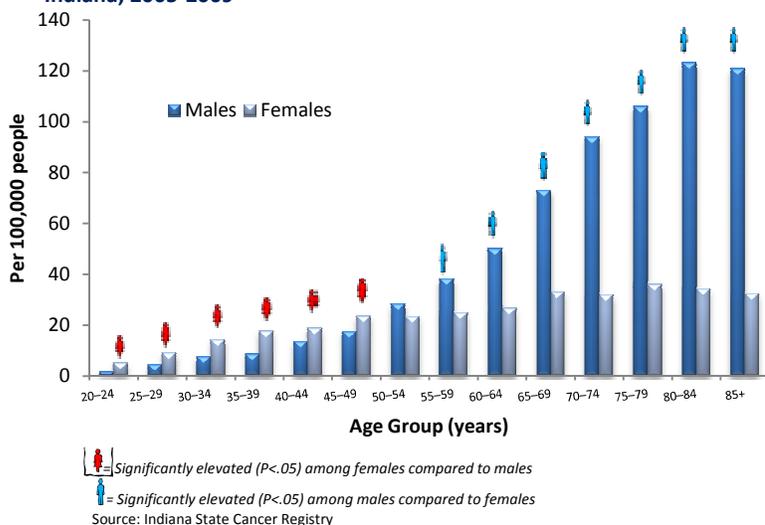




MELANOMA/SKIN CANCER is an uncontrolled growth and spread of cells or lesions in the epidermis (the outer layer of skin). Overall, skin cancers affect more people than lung, breast, colon and prostate cancers combined. The two most common forms are basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma. Melanoma accounts for less than five percent of skin cancer cases, but causes the most skin cancer deaths, killing one American every hour.¹ Overall, the lifetime risk of getting melanoma is about one in 50 for whites, one in 1,000 for African Americans, and one in 200 for Hispanics.¹

Figure 1. Incidence of Melanoma Skin Cancer by Age Group and Sex—Indiana, 2005-2009



MELANOMA/SKIN CANCER risk increases with excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or other sources, like tanning beds. The number of basal cell and squamous cell skin cancers (i.e., nonmelanoma skin cancers, or NMSC) is difficult to estimate because these cases are not required to be reported to the Indiana State Cancer Registry.

Figure 2. Burden of Melanoma—Indiana, 2005-2009

	Average number of cases per year (2005-2009)	Rate per 100,000 people* (2005-2009)	Number of cases (2009)	Rate per 100,000 people* (2009)
Indiana Incidence	1,149	17.6	1,219	18.2
Indiana Deaths	198.8	3.0	244	3.6

*Age-adjusted
Source: Indiana State Cancer Registry

Who Gets Melanoma/Skin Cancer Most Often?

People of all ages, races, and ethnicities are subject to developing skin cancer. Some risk factors include:

- ❑ **Age.** During 2005-2009, over 70 percent of melanoma cases occurred among Indiana residents ages 50 and older. However, nationally, melanoma is on the rise among younger people.
- ❑ **Sex.** Overall, during 2005-2009, the incidence rate for melanoma among Indiana males was 50 percent higher than among females. However, before the age of 50, the incidence rate among females was 64 percent higher than among males. Then, among people ages 55 and older, males had more than twice the risk that females did.
- ❑ **Race.** During 2000-2009, the risk of melanoma was 15 times higher for Indiana whites than for African Americans; however, anyone can develop the disease.
- ❑ **Fair to light skinned complexion.** Freckles are an indicator of sun sensitivity and sun damage.
- ❑ **Hair and eye color.** People with natural blonde or red hair or blue or green eyes are more susceptible to a higher risk of developing melanoma.
- ❑ **Multiple or atypical nevi (moles).** People who have a large number of moles (more than 50) often have a higher risk of developing melanoma.
- ❑ **Family history.** The risk for developing melanoma is greater for someone who has had one or more close relatives diagnosed with the disease.
- ❑ **Excessive exposure to UV radiation from the sun and tanning beds.** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the International Agency of Research on Cancer panel has declared UV radiation from the sun and artificial sources, such as tanning beds and sun lamps, a known carcinogen (cancer-causing substance) as dangerous as tobacco.
- ❑ **History of sunburn.** Sunburn at an early age can increase a person's risk for developing melanoma and other skin cancers as they age.
- ❑ **Diseases that suppress the immune system.**
- ❑ **Past history of basal cell or squamous cell skin cancers.**
- ❑ **Occupational exposure to coal tar, pitch, creosote, arsenic compounds, radium or some pesticides.**



Common Signs and Symptoms of Melanoma

A simple ABCDE rule outlines some warning signs of melanoma:

- ❑ A = Asymmetry: One half of the mole (or lesion) does not match the other half
- ❑ B = Border: Border irregularity; the edges are ragged, notched or blurred
- ❑ C = Color: The pigmentation is not uniform, with variable degrees of tan, brown or black
- ❑ D = Diameter: The diameter of a mole or skin lesion is greater than 6 millimeters (or the size of a pencil eraser). Any sudden increase in size of an existing mole should be checked.
- ❑ E = Evolution: Existing moles changing shape, size or color

Early Detection

- ❑ The best way to detect skin cancer early is to recognize changes in skin growths or the appearance of new growths. Adults should thoroughly examine their skin regularly, preferably once a month. New or unusual lesions or a progressive change in a lesion's appearance (size, shape, color, etc.) should be evaluated promptly by a health care provider.
- ❑ Melanomas often start as small, mole-like growths that increase in size and might change color. Basal cell carcinomas might appear as growths that are flat, or as small, raised, pink or red, translucent, shiny areas that might bleed following minor injury. Squamous cell cancer might appear as growing lumps, often with a rough surface, or as flat, reddish patches that grow slowly.

TAKE ACTION: Steps you can take to help prevent skin cancer

- ❑ Limit or avoid exposure to the sun during peak hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).
- ❑ Wear sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or more that protects you from both UVA and UVB rays.
- ❑ Wear clothing that has built-in SPF in the fabric or wear protective clothing such as long sleeves and long pants (tightly woven dark fabrics protect your skin better than lightly colored, loosely woven fabrics).
- ❑ Wear a hat that protects your scalp and shades your face, neck and ears.
- ❑ Avoid use of tanning beds and sun lamps.
- ❑ Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from ocular melanoma (melanoma of the eye).
- ❑ ALWAYS protect your skin—your skin is still exposed to UV rays even on cloudy days and during the winter months. Use extra caution around water, snow and sand, as they reflect the sun's ultraviolet rays.

GET INVOLVED: Join the Indiana Cancer Consortium (ICC)

- ❑ The ICC is a statewide network of over 100 agencies including the Indiana State Department of Health.
- ❑ ICC seeks to reduce the cancer burden in Indiana through the development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive plan that addresses cancer across the continuum from prevention through palliation.
- ❑ Become a member at www.indianacancer.org.

Community Resources

- ❑ For a melanoma/skin cancer toolkit with resources and information, visit www.indianacancer.org/skin_cancer_toolkit/.
- ❑ To learn more about the melanoma/skin cancer burden in Indiana, refer to the [Indiana Cancer Facts and Figures 2012](#) report at www.indianacancer.org.
- ❑ For more information on how to protect your skin and yourself, visit [Outrun the Sun, Inc.](#), Indiana's only nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting skin cancer education and melanoma research, at www.outrunthesun.org.

References

1. American Cancer Society. *Melanoma Skin Cancer Overview*. 2011. Accessed at www.cancer.org/acs/groups/cid/documents/webcontent/003063-pdf.pdf on Dec 20, 2011.