Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in the United States.\(^1\)–\(^4\) This fact sheet presents statistics about skin cancer for Minnesota and the United States as a whole.

**just the facts: Skin Cancer in Minnesota**

- **Sunburns.** A 2004 survey found that 48.7% of white adults in Minnesota had at least one sunburn in the past year—an increase from 40% in 1999.\(^5\) Sunburns are a significant risk factor for the development of skin cancer.\(^6\),\(^8\)

- **New Cases of Melanoma.** An average of 1,054 state residents were diagnosed with melanoma each year from 2003–2007.\(^9\) Melanoma is responsible for about 75% of all skin cancer deaths.\(^2\),\(^10\)
  - The rate of new melanoma diagnoses is rising faster than that of any other cancer type in Minnesota. The rate of new melanoma diagnoses rose on average by more than 7% per year between 2003 and 2007.\(^9\)

- **Deaths from Melanoma.** About 120 people in Minnesota die of melanoma every year.\(^11\)
  - Since 1975, the melanoma death rate has risen by an average of about 1.2% per year among state residents age 50 and over.\(^11\)

**survivor story: Jennifer Wunderlich**

I saw my doctor about an abnormal mole after a friend grew concerned. The mole was removed but lost before being tested. My doctor said I was fine, even when the mole came back and began to itch and bleed. Two years passed. While pregnant with my first child, I showed the changing spot to a dermatologist I worked for; she sent me for a biopsy that week. I was shocked and scared to learn I had melanoma. Further testing was postponed since I was pregnant, but after my child was born, tests showed the cancer had spread. After a full right groin lymphectomy and year-long follow up care, I’m still cancer-free almost 9 years later!

Growing up, I spent a lot of time outdoors in the sun and went to tanning beds a few times in my twenties. Since my diagnosis, I apply sunscreen prior to going outside and seek shade when I can. I tell my family, especially my kids, about the importance of sun safety, and encourage everyone to seek out a dermatologist for any skin concerns.

Jennifer Wunderlich, a Lakeville, MN resident, was 32 years old when diagnosed with Stage III melanoma.

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\(^1\)–\(^40\) All references can be found on the SunWise Web site at: www.epa.gov/sunwise/statefacts.html

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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.