SKIN CANCER
November 2014

About skin cancer

- There are two types of skin cancer: malignant melanoma which is less common but more serious; and non-melanoma skin cancer, which is very common but not so serious.
- Malignant melanoma on its own can sometimes be referred to as ‘skin cancer’.
- There are two main subtypes of non-melanoma skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). There are also a number of much rarer non-melanoma skin cancer subtypes.
- There is known under-recording of non-melanoma skin cancer incidence, partly because many cases are treated in primary care or privately and so are not notified to the cancer registries, and partly because most cancer registries record only the first diagnosis of BCC or SCC.

How common is skin cancer?

- Around 13,300 cases of malignant melanoma were diagnosed in 2011 in the UK, that’s 37 people every day.
- Like most cancers, skin cancer is more common with increasing age, but malignant melanoma rates are disproportionately high in younger people. More than one third of all cases of malignant melanoma occur in people under 55.
- More than two young adults (aged 15-34) are diagnosed with malignant melanoma every day in the UK, and it is the second most common cancer in this age group.
- Malignant melanoma is almost twice as common in young women (up to age 34) as in young men, but more men die from it.
- Over the last thirty years, rates of malignant melanoma in Great Britain have risen faster than any of the current top ten cancers.
- Malignant melanoma incidence rates have increased more than fivefold since the mid 1970s.
- The most common site for men to develop a malignant melanoma is on the chest or back. For women it is on the legs.

- People from the most affluent areas are more likely to be diagnosed with malignant melanoma than those from the more deprived areas.
- Around two-thirds of malignant melanoma cases are diagnosed at the earliest stage.
- In Europe, more than 100,000 new cases of malignant melanoma were estimated to have been diagnosed in 2012. The UK incidence rate is ninth highest in Europe for males and seventh highest for females.
- Worldwide, around 232,000 people were estimated to have been diagnosed with malignant melanoma in 2012, with incidence rates varying across the world.
- More than 102,000 cases of non-melanoma skin cancer were registered in 2011 in the UK; registration is incomplete, however, with an estimated 30-50% of BCC and around 30% of SCC going unrecorded.
- Around three-quarters of non-melanoma skin cancer registrations are BCC and less than a quarter are SCC.

- Since non-melanoma skin cancer registrations are known to be incomplete, they are usually excluded from incidence totals for all cancers combined.
How many people die from skin cancer?

- Around 2,100 people died from malignant melanoma in 2012 in the UK, that’s around 6 every day.
- Around 6 in 10 of all people who die from malignant melanoma are under 75 years old.
- In the UK, death rates from malignant melanoma in people aged 75 and over have more than quadrupled in the last 40 years.
- In Europe, around 22,200 people were estimated to have died from malignant melanoma in 2012. The UK mortality rate is 19th highest in Europe for males and 17th highest for females.
- Worldwide, around 55,500 people were estimated to have died from malignant melanoma in 2012, with mortality rates varying across the world.
- Around 640 people died from non-melanoma skin cancer in 2012 in the UK.
- More than 6 in 10 non-melanoma skin cancer deaths are in men.

How many people survive skin cancer?

- Overall, 9 in 10 people diagnosed with malignant melanoma survive their disease for at least ten years. Around 6 in 10 of all people who die from malignant melanoma are under 75 years old.
- Malignant melanoma survival has been improving for the last forty years and is now amongst the highest for any cancer.
- Survival for malignant melanoma has more than doubled in men over the last forty years.
- More than 8 in 10 men and around 9 in 10 women survive malignant melanoma for at least ten years after diagnosis.
- Five-year survival ranges from 100% in cases diagnosed at the earliest stage, to 8% (men) and 25% (women) in cases diagnosed once the disease has spread.
- Although non-melanoma skin cancer is extremely common, in the vast majority of cases it is detected early and is not life-threatening.

What causes skin cancer?

- A person’s risk of developing skin cancer depends on many factors, including age, genetics, and exposure to risk factors (including some potentially avoidable lifestyle factors).
- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the main potentially avoidable risk factor for skin cancer, linked to an estimated 86% of malignant melanoma cases in the UK.
- UV radiation from sunbeds, ionising radiation, certain occupational exposures, and certain medical conditions and medications cause skin cancer.
- Skin cancer risk varies with skin type, hair and eye colour, and number of moles.
# SKIN CANCER STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of new cases of malignant melanoma per year</td>
<td>6,495</td>
<td>6,853</td>
<td>13,348</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidence rate of malignant melanoma per 100,000 population</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of deaths from malignant melanoma per year</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>2,148</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality rate of malignant melanoma per 100,000 population</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new cases of non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) per year</td>
<td>57,800</td>
<td>44,828</td>
<td>102,628</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidence rate of NMSC per 100,000 population</td>
<td>141.6</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>113.7</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of deaths from NMSC per year</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality rate of NMSC per 100,000 population</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-year net survival - malignant melanoma</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
<td>97.9%</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-year net survival - malignant melanoma</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten-year net survival - malignant melanoma</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1. European age-standardised
2. Registration of NMSC is known to be incomplete
3. Adults diagnosed
4. Latest statistics available

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*Produced by Cancer Research UK’s Statistical Information Team, Key Facts are a series of simple key messages about statistics and facts on common cancers.*

*Find cancer statistics on our website [cruk.org/cancerstats](http://cruk.org/cancerstats) or by emailing stats.team@cancer.org.uk*

*The Statistical Information Team also provides other materials and web-based statistics and information, all written for health professionals. Covering data for around 30 common cancers, these include up-to-date incidence, survival and mortality statistics, lifetime risk, prevalence, risk factors, treatments, and screening information - and it’s all free.*