

Melanoma - Statistics [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board \[2\]](#), 09/2015

ON THIS PAGE: You will find information about how many people are diagnosed with this type of cancer each year. You will also learn some general information on surviving the disease. Remember, survival rates depend on several factors. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

This year an estimated 76,380 adults (46,870 men and 29,510 women) in the United States will be diagnosed with melanoma of the skin. Melanoma is the fifth most common cancer among men and the seventh most common cancer in women. Before age 50, more women are diagnosed with melanoma than men. However, by age 65, the rate is more than 2 times higher in men. By age 80, the rate in men is nearly 3 times higher than in women.

Melanoma accounts for about 1% of all skin cancers diagnosed in the United States, but it causes most of the skin cancer deaths. It is estimated that 10,130 deaths (6,750 men and 3,380 women) from melanoma will occur this year. Although the number of people diagnosed with melanoma has risen sharply over the past three decades, rates have stabilized and decreased among people under age 50 in the past 5 years.

Most people with melanoma are cured by their initial surgery. The 5-year survival rate tells you what percent of people live at least 5 years after the cancer is found. Percent means how many out of 100. The 5-year survival rate for people with melanoma is 92%. The 10-year survival rate is 89%.

Overall survival depends upon thickness of the primary melanoma, whether the lymph nodes are involved, and whether there is spread of melanoma to distant sites. Lymph nodes are the small, bean-shaped organs that help fight infection. For early-stage melanoma that is only located near where it started, the 5-year survival rate is 98%. The survival rate for melanoma

that has spread to the nearby lymph nodes is 63%. If it has spread to other parts of the body, the survival rate is 17%. However, survival rates vary depending on a number of factors. These factors are explained in detail in the [Diagnosis](#) [3] and [Stages sections](#) [4].

It is important to remember that statistics on how many people survive this type of cancer are an estimate. The estimate comes from data based on thousands of people with this cancer in the United States each year. So, your own risk may be different.

In addition, it's important to know that these statistics are based on data from 7 to 30 years ago and do not reflect the effects of newer treatments for metastatic melanoma (see the [Treatment Options](#) [5] section). The pace of melanoma research is rapid, especially over the last 5 years. Doctors cannot say for sure how long anyone will live with melanoma. Also, experts measure the survival statistics in 5-year intervals. This means that the estimate may not show the results of better diagnosis or treatment available for less than 5 years. Learn more about [understanding statistics](#) [6].

Statistics adapted from the American Cancer Society's publication, Cancer Facts & Figures 2016.

The [next section in this guide is Medical Illustrations](#) [7]. It offers a drawing of the structures that make up the skin. Or, use the menu on the left side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

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[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19256>

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[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19258>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24961>

[7] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19253>