

Skin Cancer Prevention and Education Initiative



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides leadership for nationwide efforts to reduce illness and death caused by skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the United States. The message of CDC's Skin Cancer Primary Prevention and Education Initiative is clear: When in the sun, seek shade, cover up, get a hat, wear sunglasses, and use sunscreen.

The Burden of Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. The two most common types of skin cancer—basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas—are highly curable. However, melanoma, the third most common skin cancer, is more dangerous, especially among young people (2). Approximately, 65%-90% of melanomas are caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light or sunlight (2).

The following statistics refer to new cases of—and deaths from—melanomas of the skin and other non-epithelial skin cancers. These statistics do not include data for basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas, which are not tracked by the United States Cancer Statistics registries.

In 2002 (1),*

- 48,249 people in the United States were diagnosed

* Incidence counts cover approximately 93% of the U.S. population. Death counts cover 100% of the U.S. population. Use caution in comparing incidence and death counts.

Ongoing Work

CDC's skin cancer prevention and education efforts include:

- Funding cancer programs in three states to implement skin cancer activities outlined in the states' Comprehensive Cancer Control (CCC) plans, through the National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program.
- Funding education agencies in three states to collaborate with the states' departments of health to conduct demonstration projects implementing

the "Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer."

- Supporting epidemiologic, behavioral science, and surveillance research efforts designed to expand the knowledge about skin cancer prevention and control.
- Promoting and disseminating "Shade Planning for America's Schools," a manual to help schools create and maintain a physical environment that supports sun safety by ensuring that school grounds have adequate shade (available at www.cdc.gov/cancer/nscpep/).

Future Directions

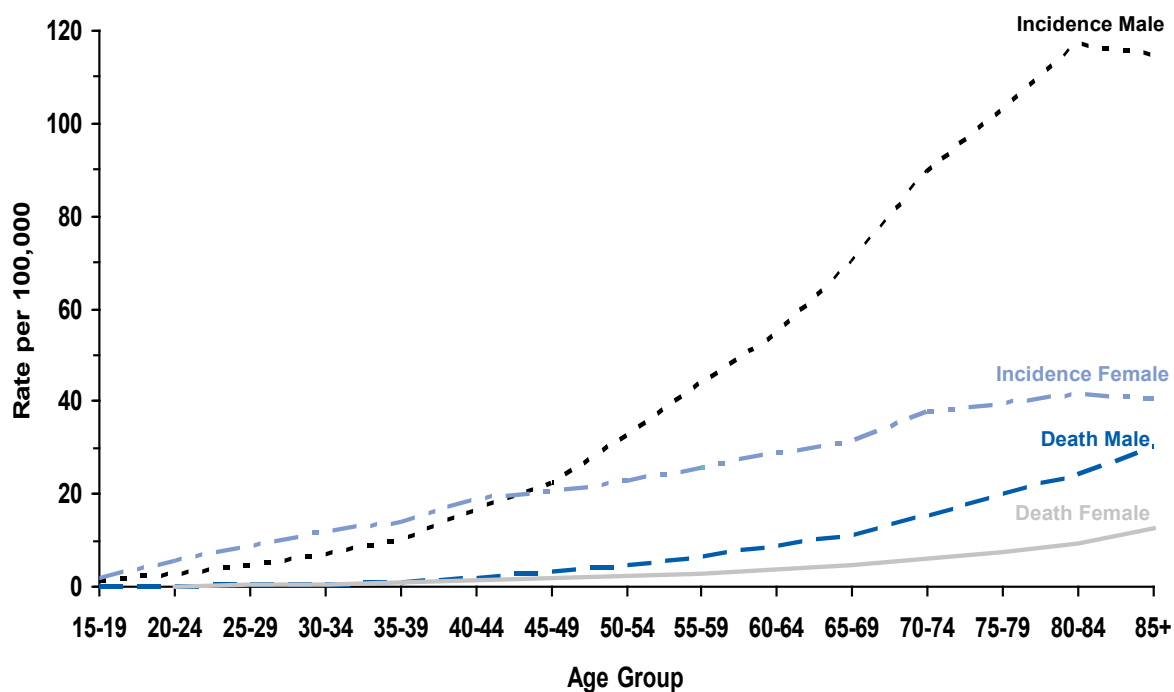
CDC plans to expand its Skin Cancer Prevention Education Initiative to

- Enhance prevention research to identify effective strategies for reducing skin cancer risk.
- Increase support of skin cancer activities described in states' CCC plans. Specifically, CDC's National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program will

fund selected states with approved skin cancer activities.

- Promote, disseminate, and support the implementation of the "Guidelines for School Programs to Prevent Skin Cancer."

Melanoma of the Skin (Invasive) Average Annual Age-Specific SEER Incidence and U.S. Death Rates By Sex, 2000-2003



Source: SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2003

