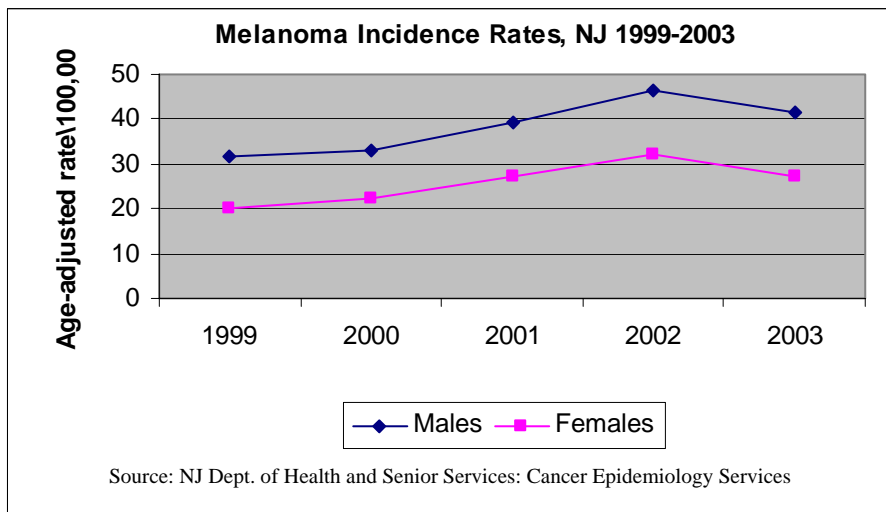




HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET June 2006

Skin Cancer and Melanoma Awareness

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, affecting more than one million Americans each year. Malignant melanoma is the rarest but deadliest form of skin cancer.
- Over 2,900 cases of melanoma of the skin were diagnosed in New Jersey in 2003.
- There were 230 deaths due to melanoma of the skin among New Jersey residents in 2003.
- Melanoma is most common among those with lighter skin color. For example, whites are 20 times more likely than blacks to be diagnosed with melanoma.
- The melanoma incidence rate for males is nearly 60% higher than the rate for females, while the mortality rate is more than twice as high for males than for females.



- Risk factors for melanoma include excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (sunlight), fair skin, history of severe sunburns, personal or family history of melanoma, multiple moles or atypical moles (colored skin spots), giant congenital moles, xeroderma pigmentosum (a rare hereditary disease), and reduced immune function due to organ transplants or HIV infection.

- In 2003, about 33% of men and 26% of women in New Jersey report experiencing at least one sunburn during the past year. Nearly half of adults aged 18-24 report experiencing at least one sunburn during the previous year.
- Skin cancer can be prevented by limiting direct exposure to the sun especially during midday when the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are strongest. If direct sun exposure cannot be avoided, sunscreen, umbrellas, broad-brimmed hats, and long-sleeved shirts and pants made of sun-resistant fabrics should be used.

- Early detection of skin cancer is possible by self-examination of moles and other unusual spots on the skin followed up by a doctor's exam of suspicious findings.
- The "ABCDs" of melanoma detection are:
 - A-asymmetrical spots
 - B-borders that are uneven or irregular
 - C-color that is uneven and unusual
 - D-diameter larger than a quarter inch
- Treatment for skin cancer depends on many factors but usually includes surgery to remove the cancerous cells.

For more information about skin cancer from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services:
www.state.nj.us/health/cancer

For more information from the American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org

For more information the American Academy of Dermatology: www.aad.org

Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Cancer Control and Prevention:
[Melanoma Fact Sheet](#)

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Cancer Epidemiology Services:
Cancer Surveillance Program,
[NJ Cancer Incidence and Mortality](#)
[Cancer Risk Factors Fact Sheet](#)

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:
New Jersey 1999-2003 Death Certificate Data Files
[New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2003](#)



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