



What is Melanoma?

Melanoma is one of several types of skin cancers. Melanoma is the most dangerous skin cancer due to its probability of spread. Melanoma usually starts in the skin cells called melanocytes. Melanocytes make a brown pigment called melanin, which is visibly seen as a tan, mole, or freckles.



Melanoma Facts: 2009-2013

- CDC states: 339,215 new cases of melanoma of the skin diagnosed.
- Melanoma of the skin is in the top 10 cancers by rate of new cases.
- 7,972 new Melanoma of the skin cases in Virginia
- National average rate of new Melanomas (per 100,000 people) 20.3
- Virginia's average rate of new Melanomas (per 100,000) 18.6
- Virginia ranking 14th lowest state (average from 2009-2013)

Colors of Melanoma

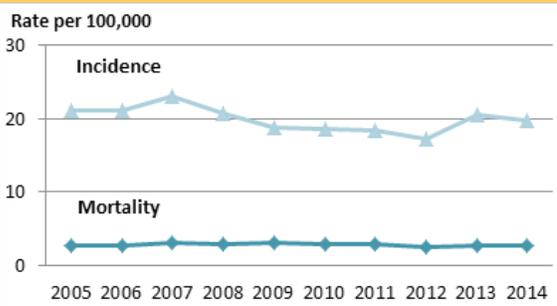
Although typically, melanomas are brown or black in color, they can also appear pink, tan or even white. They can develop anywhere, including eyes, but are most common on skin areas with more direct sun exposure.

Melanoma in Virginia

As a Virginian, what does melanoma mean? In collaboration with the Virginia Division of Population Health

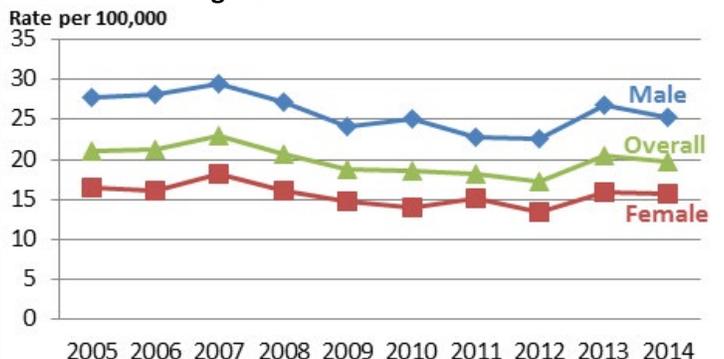
Data Epidemiology, the Virginia Cancer Registry would like to increase awareness. Virginia remains below the National average rate of incidence for Melanoma. In the commonwealth, as well as nationally, melanoma is most common in white males. Although, mortality is low and steady, it is a factor with this aggressive type of skin cancer. Virginia's rates of new melanoma cases are also on a decline.

Virginia Melanoma Incidence and Mortality



Graph courtesy of Virginia Division of Population Health Data Epidemiology

Melanoma in Virginia



Graph and statistics courtesy of Virginia Division of Population Health Data Epidemiology Reference site for National rates: <https://nccd.cdc.gov/USCSDataViz/rdPage.aspx>



What to look for?

Remember your ABCDEs:



A

Asymmetry – If you draw a line through the middle of the mole, will the two halves match (symmetry)?



B

Border – Melanoma borders tend to be uneven, scalloped or notched.



C

Color – Is there a variety of colors? Is the mole changing colors or darkening?



D

Diameter – Melanomas are often larger than a pencil eraser.



E

Evolving – Is the mole evolving or changing in size, shape, color, elevation or bleeding, itching or crusting.

These signs don't necessarily mean you'll be diagnosed with melanoma or another type of skin cancer, but they are a good indication that you should get checked by a physician.

For more information on Melanoma check out the following sites:

www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-cancer-registry/
www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/index.htm

Photos from National Cancer Institute: <https://visualsonline.cancer.gov>



Lower your Risk:

- Stay in the shade, especially during midday hours.
- Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs.
- Wear sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and both UVA and UVB (broad spectrum) protection.
- Avoid indoor tanning.

