

2017 Skin Cancer Fact Sheet

- Skin cancer remains the most common cancer diagnosed in Canada—more than the number of breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancers **combined**—of which, basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma are the two most common forms.¹
- Of the non-melanoma skin cancers, basal cell carcinomas (BCC) are diagnosed anywhere from twice to four times as much (2:1-4:1) as squamous cell carcinomas (SCC).²
- **80-90%** of skin cancers are caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. The radiation can come from tanning beds, sun lamps, or regular exposure to sunlight—all are risk factors for cellular damage.¹
- Further risk factors include fair skin (particularly when combined with red hair), susceptibility to blistering sunburns, and having many moles, particularly ones that are large and/or irregular in shape.
- The best way to minimize the risk of developing skin cancer is through limiting exposure to sunlight during peak hours (11-3 o'clock), using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, and covering exposed skin whenever possible.
- Canadians who were born in the 1990s are **two to three times more likely** to develop skin cancer in their lifetime (one in six) than Canadians born in the 1960s, who have a one in twenty chance of developing it.¹
- Accordingly, 7% of new cancers diagnosed in adolescents and young adults (15-29) are melanoma. In the same age group, 4% of cancer deaths are from melanoma.⁵
- People who use tanning beds before the age of 35 are 59% more likely to develop a form of skin cancer than those who do not; the risk grows with repeated use.³
- The five-year relative survival rate for basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is 100%. That means five years after diagnosis, **Canadians with these non-melanoma skin cancers are just as likely to be alive as the average population.** For squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), it is 95%.⁴
- Men have a 1.7% chance of developing melanoma in their lifetime; women have a 1.3% chance. Men have a 0.4% chance of dying of melanoma in their lifetime, and women, a 0.2% chance.⁵
- Conversely, five-year survival rates for melanoma are second only to thyroid cancer, with 92% survival for females and 85% for males.⁵

Please visit www.dermatology.ca for more information on the prevention and early detection of skin cancer.

¹ Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation. <http://www.canadianskincancerfoundation.com/about-skin-cancer.html>

² Abbas, Mariam, and Kalia, Sunil. *Trends in Non-Melanoma Skin Cancers in Canada*. Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery, Vol. 20, No. 2, p 171.

³ American Academy of Dermatology. <https://www.aad.org/media/stats/prevention-and-care>

⁴ Canadian Cancer Society. <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/skin-non-melanoma/prognosis-and-survival/survival-statistics/?region=on>

⁵ Canadian Cancer Statistics 2017.