

At a glance

- Melanoma is the third most common form of cancer in Australian men and women (10% of all cancers)

Men: 1. Prostate 2. Bowel 3. Melanoma 4. Lung
Women : 1. Breast 2. Bowel 3. Melanoma 4. Lung

- More than 12,500 new cases of melanoma are diagnosed in Australia every year.
- Be aware melanoma is often identifiable at an early stage where surgical treatment can result in a complete cure.
- Melanoma can arise in a mole or freckle or even normal looking skin.
- Melanoma can develop almost anywhere, including the skin, eyes, digestive tract, genitals, under the nails, or even in the mouth.
- If melanoma spreads widely in the body, known treatments rarely cure patients.

Melanoma is Australia's 'national cancer'

- Australia has the highest incidence of melanoma in the world.
- Melanoma rates have doubled in the 20 years from 1986-2006.
- 1 in 17 Australians will be diagnosed with melanoma before age 85.

Melanoma is the most common cancer in young Australians

- Melanoma is the most common cancer in young Australians aged 15–39 years old.
- In this age group, melanoma makes up 20% of all cancer cases.
- In 20–34 year-olds, melanoma kills more young Australians than any other single cancer.

Melanoma affects men more than women

- Females risk to age 85 = 1 in 23.
- Males risk to age 85 = 1 in 14.
- Compared to women, men are more than 2.5 times as likely to die from melanoma.

Melanoma can kill you

- More than 1500 Australians die from melanoma each year.
- Melanoma was responsible for 3.4% of all cancer deaths in Australia in 2010.

Established individual risk factors include

- Having a pale complexion.
- Having red or blonde hair.
- Having skin that freckles, that tans poorly or is sensitive to the sun.
- A large number of moles on the skin.
- A family history of the disease.

Potentially controllable factors

- Avoiding blistering sunburns under age 20 (1 blistered sunburn doubles your risk, 3 or more increases risk by 5 times).
- Avoiding exposing skin to strong sun.
- Avoid solarium use – UVA intensity of solariums is up to 6 times stronger than the sun (every tanning session under age 35 increases melanoma risk by 59%).