



Canadian
Cancer
Society

Media backgrounder #1: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2014

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TORONTO -

Skin cancer is the special topic in *Canadian Cancer Statistics 2014*, released today by the Canadian Cancer Society in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada and Statistics Canada.

Fast facts

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Canada, with an estimated 6,500 new cases of melanoma and 76,100 cases of non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) expected to be diagnosed in 2014.
- An estimated 1,050 deaths due to melanoma and 440 deaths due to NMSC are expected in 2014.
- Together, melanoma and NMSC will account for nearly the same number of new cancer cases as the 4 major cancers combined (lung, breast, colorectal and prostate).
- 1 in 59 Canadian men will develop melanoma in his lifetime. 1 in 240 will die from it.
- 1 in 73 Canadian women will develop melanoma in her lifetime. 1 in 395 will die from it.
- Skin cancer is one of the fastest rising types of cancer in Canada.

Types of skin cancer

Of the 2 main types of skin cancer (melanoma and NMSC), melanoma is deadlier.

- NMSC is much more common than melanoma. NMSC has 2 main subtypes: squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) and basal cell carcinoma (BCC).
- SCC tends to be more aggressive than BCC. It is more likely to spread to fatty tissues under the skin, lymph nodes and distant parts of the body.



- BCC is usually slow growing. It is very rare for a BCC to spread to nearby lymph nodes or distant parts of the body. However, if a BCC is left untreated, it can grow into nearby areas and spread to the bone or beneath the skin.

Incidence rate (rate of new cases) of melanoma skin cancer

- In 2010, the age-adjusted melanoma incidence rate was 14.7 per 100,000 for men and 11.9 per 100,000 for women.
- The incidence of melanoma has increased significantly among men and women during the past 25 years.
 - Among men, the age-adjusted incidence rate increased an average of 2% per year between 1986 and 2010, from 9 to 15 cases per 100,000.
 - In women, the age-adjusted incidence rate of melanoma increased an average of 1.5% per year over the same period, from 8 to 12 cases per 100,000, but the increase was accelerated during the last 8 years at 2.6% per year.
- The incidence rate of melanoma rises significantly with age. Melanoma is very rare in children under 15 years of age, with less than 1 case per 100,000, and peaks in men between 85 and 90 years of age at approximately 85 cases per 100,000.

Incidence rate of non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC)

Non-melanoma skin cancer accounts for at least 30% of all new cancer cases in Canada. About 80% of NMSC cases are BCC and about 20% are SCC.

- The lifetime risk of NMSC is estimated to be 13% (roughly 1 in 8) for BCC and 5% (1 in 20) for SCC.
- Men are more likely than women to be diagnosed with SCC (62% of new cases are in men). New cases of BCC are roughly equal in men and women.

Survival for melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer

- The 5-year relative survival rate for melanoma in men is 85% and in women, 92%.
- The 5-year relative survival rate for SCC is 95% and for BCC is 101% (survival is not lower than in the general population of the same age and sex).



Death from melanoma

- 1 in 240 men and 1 in 395 women will die from melanoma.
- In 2009, the Canadian age-adjusted death rate from melanoma was 3.2 per 100,000 for men and 1.6 per 100,000 for women.
- The age-adjusted death rate from melanoma has increased significantly among men and women in the last 25 years:
 - In men, the age-adjusted death rate increased 1.2% per year between 1986 and 2009, from 2.3 to 3.2 per 100,000.
 - In women it increased an average of 0.4% per year during the same period from 1.3 to 1.6 per 100,000.
- Similar to incidence, the increase in the death rate from melanoma is highest in older compared to younger Canadians:
 - The increase in the age-adjusted death rate from 1986 to 2009 was highest in men and women aged 75 and older at 3.4% and 1.9% per year, respectively. During the same timeframe, there was no increase in the death rate for melanoma for men and women aged 15 to 64. In fact, the death rate decreased significantly in men and women aged 30 to 44 by 2.4% per year.

Prevalence of skin cancer

As of January 1, 2009, it was estimated that 39,495 Canadians had been diagnosed with skin cancer in the previous 10 years and were still alive.

Skin cancer risk factors

- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from overexposure to the sun or use of indoor tanning beds is the main risk factor for skin cancers, responsible for up to 90% of cases in North America.
- The risk of melanoma is highest (over twice as high) among those with fair skin, especially skin that burns easily and tans poorly, red hair or multiple or atypical moles.
- History of 5 or more sunburns in any decade of life more than doubles the risk for melanoma.



- A family history of melanoma or having a first-degree relative with melanoma is associated with a 2- to 4-fold increase in melanoma risk.
- A personal history of melanoma or non-melanoma skin cancer increases the risk of getting melanoma.

International trends

- Worldwide, melanoma represents 4% of all skin cancers but it is responsible for 80% of skin cancer deaths and 1%–2% of all cancer deaths.
- According to global estimates for 2012, there were over 230,000 new cases of melanoma and an estimated 55,000 related deaths.

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Glossary

Five-year relative survival is the proportion of people who are alive 5 years after their diagnosis, adjusted for the deaths expected for people of the same age in the general population. Relative survival is the most often used method for analyzing the survival of people with cancer in a population.

Age-adjusted rates refer to the number of people per 100,000 who are diagnosed with, or die of, cancer. Age adjustment allows comparisons of rates across different years since it accounts for changes that have occurred over time in the age of the population.

Prevalence is the number of people with a new or previous cancer diagnosis in a given population who are alive on a specific date (known as the index date).

NMSC is non-melanoma skin cancer.

SCC is squamous cell carcinoma.

BCC is basal cell carcinoma.

About the Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national, community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is to eradicate cancer and enhance the quality of life of people living with



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cancer. Thanks to our donors and volunteers, the Society has the most impact, against the most cancers, in the most communities in Canada. Building on our progress, we are working with Canadians to change cancer forever. For more information, visit cancer.ca or call our toll-free bilingual Cancer Information Service at 1-888-939-3333 (TTY 1-866-786-3934).