

MELANOMA - the facts

DID YOU KNOW?

Melanoma is a very common cancer in Europe.¹



BUT WHAT IS MELANOMA?

Skin cancer can be categorized as **melanoma** or **non-melanoma**.² While non-melanoma is far more common, the majority of skin cancer deaths are caused by the more aggressive melanoma.³

MELANOMA

Melanoma is a cancer that affects the lower layers of the skin and occurs when these cells lose the ability to control their own growth. Specifically, melanoma is caused by a malfunction in melanocytes – the cells that usually produce pigment to protect your skin from UV radiation.⁴

METASTATIC MELANOMA

If melanoma is left untreated it can grow and spread from the skin to the lymph nodes and subsequently to other parts of the body. This is called metastatic melanoma and is more difficult to treat.³

MELANOMA IN EUROPE

Incidence

In 2012 there were **more than 100,000** new diagnoses of malignant melanoma in Europe making malignant melanoma the **9th most common European cancer**.⁵

Survival

Only **16%** of people initially diagnosed with metastatic disease will survive **5 YEARS** or longer.⁶

In 2012, **22,000** Europeans were estimated to have died from melanoma.⁷

TREATMENT

Treatment is tailored to the form of skin cancer that a person has and will be appropriate for the risks that are posed by their cancer – no two cancers are exactly the same and the treatments discussed below may vary from those recommended by healthcare professionals.

Treating melanoma

The primary treatment for melanoma is often surgery but this depends on a person's individual circumstances.³

In order to best plan individual treatments, a staging system is used that tells healthcare professionals how advanced a melanoma is. This system classifies cancers from stages 1-4 depending on their thickness, appearance and whether or not they have spread to other parts of the body.⁸

Treating Stage 1–3 melanoma

Treating stages 1-3 usually involves surgically removing the tumour and an area of surrounding skin. A healthcare professional may also advise further checks or surgeries to ensure that all of the cancer has been removed, such as biopsies.⁸ Unfortunately many stage 3 melanomas are not suitable for surgery and some will recur after surgery. In these patients alternative treatments need to be considered.

Treating Stage 4 melanoma

Melanoma is stage 4 if it has spread distantly. Sites of distant spread can include the skin, lymph nodes, lungs, liver or brain. Distantly metastatic disease can be hard to manage, but current treatment options include radiation, immunotherapy, targeted therapy, or chemotherapy.⁸

Matching the treatment to the patient

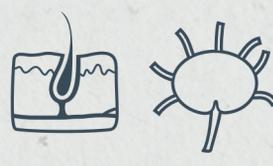
Melanoma is a complex cancer that may require the use of multiple forms of treatment over the course of the disease. While there have been recent new options in treatment, additional treatment options are needed.



Surgery can be effective in controlling early stage disease but residual tumour cells can remain. These cells have the ability to evade the immune system and, as such, recurrence occurs in some patients.



As tumour burdens increase, patients may become candidates for systemic therapy. Important factors when considering if systemic therapy is warranted include how quickly the disease is progressing and how widespread the disease has become.⁹



There are patients whose melanoma remains confined to local or distant skin and/or lymph nodes. Although there is currently no consensus as to the optimal treatment approach for these patients, doctors can work with patients to develop an individual treatment plan, which may include newly approved therapies.¹⁰

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