

MELANOMA SURVIVAL RATES

WHAT ARE THE SURVIVAL RATES FOR MELANOMA BY STAGE?

Survival rates are often used by doctors as a standard way of discussing a person's prognosis (outlook). Some patients may want to know the survival statistics for people in similar situations, while others may not find the numbers helpful, or may even not want to know them. Whether or not you want to read about the survival statistics below for melanoma is up to you.

The 5-year and 10-year survival rates refer to the percentage of patients who live at least this long after their cancer is diagnosed. Of course, many people live much longer than 5 or 10 years (and many are cured).

In order to get 5- and 10-year survival rates, doctors have to look at people who were treated at least 5 or 10 years ago. Improvements in treatment since then may result in a more favorable outlook for people now being diagnosed with melanoma.

Survival rates are often based on previous outcomes of large numbers of people who had the disease, but they cannot predict what will happen in any particular person's case. Knowing the type and the stage of a person's cancer is important in estimating their outlook. But many other factors may also affect a person's outlook, such as the genetic changes in the cancer cells and how well the cancer responds to treatment. Even when taking these other factors into account, survival rates are at best rough estimates. Your doctor can tell you if the numbers below may apply, as he or she is familiar with the aspects of your particular situation.

The following survival rates are based on nearly 60,000 patients who were part of the 2008 AJCC Melanoma Staging Database. These are observed survival rates. They include some people diagnosed with melanoma who may have later died from other causes, such as heart disease. Therefore, the percentage of people surviving the melanoma itself may be higher.

Stage IA: The 5-year survival rate is around 97%. The 10-year survival is around 95%.

Stage IB: The 5-year survival rate is around 92%. The 10-year survival is around 86%.

Stage IIA: The 5-year survival rate is around 81%. The 10-year survival is around 67%.

Stage IIB: The 5-year survival rate is around 70%. The 10-year survival is around 57%.

Stage IIC: The 5-year survival rate is around 53%. The 10-year survival is around 40%.

Stage IIIA: The 5-year survival rate is around 78%. The 10-year survival is around 68%.

Stage IIIB: The 5-year survival rate is around 59%. The 10-year survival is around 43%.

Stage IIIC: The 5-year survival rate is around 40%. The 10-year survival is around 24%.

Stage IV: The 5-year survival rate for stage IV melanoma is about 15% to 20%. The 10-year survival is about 10% to 15%. The outlook is better if the spread is only to distant parts of the skin or distant lymph nodes rather than to other organs, or if the blood level of lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) is normal.

OTHER FACTORS

Other factors aside from stage may also affect survival. For example, stage for stage, older people generally have shorter survival times. The biggest drop begins at age 70. Melanoma is uncommon among African Americans, but when it does occur, survival times tend to be shorter than when it occurs in whites. Some studies have shown that melanoma is more serious if it occurs on a foot, palm, or nail bed. People with HIV infection and melanoma also are at greater risk of dying of their melanoma.

