

Clinton County Profiles in Public Health: SUN SAFETY

Winter 2019-20

OVERVIEW

Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States (US), yet most cases are preventable. Despite increased awareness, skin cancer rates have continued to rise—accounting for 5.5% of all new cancer cases in the US in 2019.¹ Given the weather experienced much of the year in Upstate New York, many believe that skin cancer is not an issue for this region. However, Clinton County rates of melanoma are higher than state and national rates, and residents report experiencing sunburn(s) at higher rates as well.

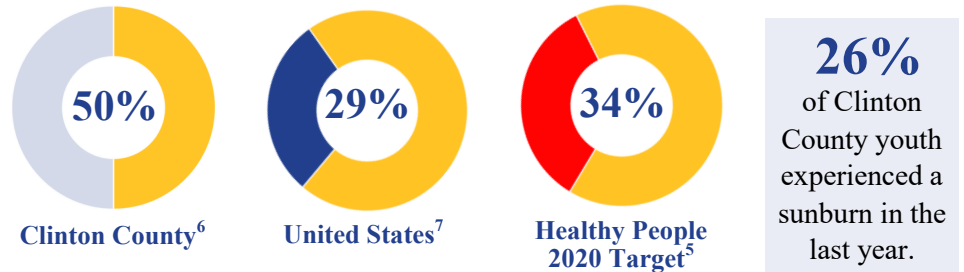
As residents are encouraged to be more physically active and outdoor spaces for them to do so are created or revitalized, potential increased exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation must be considered. In addition, artificial sources of tanning are a significant contributing factor.

The Surgeon General has issued a *Call to Action* to prevent skin cancer and increase awareness of the dangers associated with UV radiation.² Skin cancer screenings and self-examination counseling are not routinely completed by medical providers for all patients, as insufficient evidence has been found to support these activities.^{3,4} To decrease rates of melanoma, residents must be empowered to increase their practice of preventive behaviors and decrease use of artificial sources of tanning.

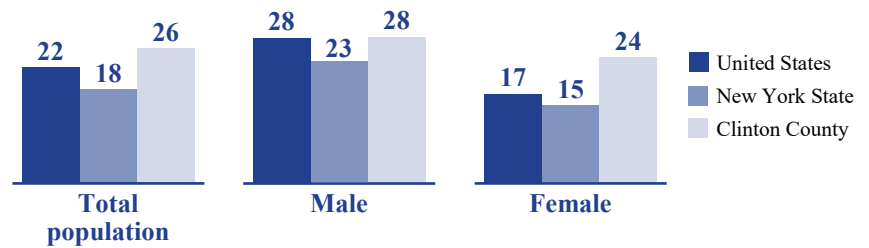
SUNBURNS & MELANOMA

Exposure to UV radiation during childhood and adolescence has been linked to increased rates of skin cancer, including melanoma. Healthy People 2020⁵ aims to reduce the number of adolescents and adults reporting sunburn and increase the number of individuals following protective measures that may reduce the risk of skin cancer.⁵

Percentage of residents who experienced 1 or more sunburn in the last year



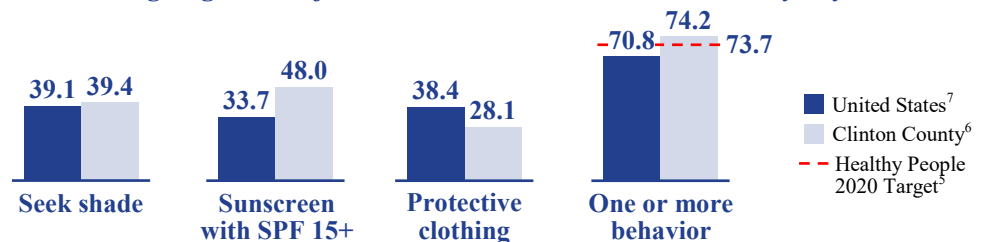
Cases of melanoma per 100,000⁸



PREVENTIVE BEHAVIORS

Practicing preventive behaviors is vital in protecting against harmful radiation from the sun. Resident data collected by CCHD indicate that from 2016 to 2019, more residents are taking sun protective measures *always or most of the time*, and fewer residents are *never* practicing these behaviors. In addition, residents are more likely to practice or encourage these behaviors for children in their household than for themselves. Males are more likely to wear a baseball cap or other protective clothing, whereas females are more likely to use sunscreen. Lastly, sun safety behaviors vary by age, with residents 65 years and older more likely to seek shade and younger residents more likely to use sunscreen.

Percentage of adults who use sun protection always or most of the time when going outside for more than 1 hour on a warm, sunny day



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¹NIH National Cancer Institute, Melanoma of the Skin - Cancer Stat Facts (<https://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/melan.html>)

²2014 Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer (www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/call-to-action-prevent-skin-cancer.pdf)

³2016 USPSTF Recommendation: Screening for Skin Cancer (<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2536643>)

⁴2018 USPSTF Recommendation: Behavioral Counseling to Prevent Skin Cancer (<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2675556>)

⁵Healthy People 2020 objectives (www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/cancer/objectives)

⁶2019 Clinton County Sun Safety Survey

⁷CDC National Center for Health Statistics, 2015 National Health Interview Survey (www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/nhis_2015_data_release.htm)

⁸CDC US Cancer Statistics 2012-2016 (<https://gis.cdc.gov/Cancer/USCS/DataViz.html>)

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EDUCATION

In 2019, sun safety messages reached **706** Clinton County residents at community events. Messages were viewed almost **10,000** times across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



1
radio
interview



300+
Summer
Safety
Guides



6
community
events



25
social
media
messages

INDOOR TANNING

Sun safety interventions, such as age restriction laws, have been put in place by many states to aid in prevention efforts.

Indoor tanning increases the risk of melanoma by **60%**.



Effective August 2018, NYS Public Health Law prohibits persons under 18 years of age from using UV radiation devices. Since then, the number of tanning facilities in Clinton County have decreased more than **50%**, from 17 in 2018 to 9 in 2019.

Age restriction laws are linked to a **47%** decrease in indoor tanning among female high school students.⁹

Healthy People 2020 aims to reduce the number of adolescents and adults using artificial sources for tanning.⁵

SUNSCREEN DISPENSERS

A 2016 CCHD survey collected baseline data on resident sun practices and interest in public sunscreen dispensers. Of those surveyed, **80%** indicated they would use sunscreen dispensers in various locations throughout the community, if they were available. Following this, CCHD secured funding for the project and brought on community partners as dispenser stewards. A 2019 survey reassessed resident sun practices and dispenser use. To learn more about where dispensers are located and participating local partners visit www.clintonhealth.org/sunsafety.

In 2019, residents surveyed reported using the dispensers:

Instead of applying sunscreen at home.	28%
When they forgot to apply sunscreen at home.	24%
To reapply sunscreen.	37%



Sunscreen dispensers offering FREE sunscreen are now available at **21 locations** throughout Clinton County.

MOBILIZING ACTION

Recommendations for Residents, Health Professionals and Community Leaders

RESIDENTS

- Never use a tanning bed, booth, or sun lamp.
- Take preventive measures, such as wearing protective clothing and applying broad spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher.
- Educate children and adolescents on the dangers of UV exposure and encourage them to practice preventive measures.
- Stay vigilant for skin changes and share changes or concerns with health care professionals regularly.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

- Educate patients on the dangers of exposure to UV radiation and skin cancer.
- Encourage patients to use protective measures to decrease their risk of developing a sunburn.
- Instruct patients to avoid use of tanning beds, booths or sun lamps.
- Remain alert for skin lesions with features associated with increased risk for cancer.
- Support indoor tanning age restriction laws.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

- Support indoor tanning age restriction laws.
- Encourage event planners to consider sun exposure and safety in event planning.
- Promote the installation of shade structures and free sunscreen dispensers at public outdoor spaces commonly used for recreational activities.



⁹CDC Skin Cancer Prevention Progress Report 2018 (www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/pdf/SkinCancerPreventionProgressReport-2018-508.pdf)