

Activity – Melanoma

Activity sheet B – Melanoma

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer. The main cause of melanoma is **UV radiation**, which damages DNA in the nucleus of cells and leads to the development of cancer. The cells that become cancerous in melanoma are called **melanocytes**. They are found between the dermis and epidermis of the skin. The job of melanocytes is to make a pigment called **melanin**, which helps to protect the body from UV radiation. Melanin is responsible for the colour of your skin. People who are very fair skinned, especially with fair or red hair, are more at risk of developing melanoma. So are people with a lot of freckles. People with naturally darker skins have more active melanocytes, and make more of the pigment. Exposing your skin to UV radiation causes the melanocytes to make more of the pigment.

1 Select the correct answer to complete the sentences below.

- In men, melanoma occurs most often on the **head and neck / trunk / arms / legs**.
 - In women, melanoma occurs most often on the **head and neck / trunk / arms / legs**.
 - Suggest a reason for the difference.
-

2 Choose **true** or **false** for each of the following statements about the number of people diagnosed with melanoma between 1975 and 2004.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| a) More people are diagnosed with melanoma every year. | True or false? |
| b) More people are diagnosed with melanoma almost every year. | True or false? |
| c) Fewer people are diagnosed with melanoma every year. | True or false? |
| d) More males than females are diagnosed with melanoma every year. | True or false? |

3 Select the correct answer to complete the sentence below about the age at which people are diagnosed with melanoma.

- The most common age group to be diagnosed with melanoma is **5–9 / 30–34 / 65–69 / 85+**.
 - Suggest a reason for this.
-

4 Fill in the gaps to complete the sentences below.

- In the age group _____ the same number of males and females are diagnosed with melanoma.
- After the age of _____ more males than females are diagnosed with melanoma.

5 Why do you think children between the ages of 0 and 4 don't get melanoma?
