

# Which of these women had skin cancer?



## JEN

- Age 34
- Likes to use a tanning bed
- Has moles across her chest

## JAIME

- Age 19
- Hates the sun
- Has an Irish-Italian grandmother



## STEPHANIE

- Age 30
- Loves the outdoors
- Always tanned growing up

Skin cancer doesn't just happen to other people. Your chance of developing it is 1 in 5—higher than for any other type of cancer. Scariest still: Most cases can be prevented with routine sun protection. Read on for how to protect yourself

THE ANSWER?

# THEY ALL DID.

1 person in the U.S. dies of melanoma every hour.

**“I couldn’t believe it was malignant melanoma.”**



**Jen, 34, mother of two**

I started going to a tanning salon my senior year in college, and since

then, it's become my half hour of peace—it's a place I go to relax, especially now that I have two kids. Then, earlier this year, I noticed that a mole on my chest had developed red borders. I

knew this wasn't a good sign—my mother had just been diagnosed with skin cancer, so I was aware of what to look for. My dermatologist said she wanted to biopsy it right away, and three days later, she called to tell me it was malignant melanoma. I was a wreck. I couldn't believe it—I had the most deadly kind of skin cancer. But in the end, I was incredibly lucky:

Further testing showed that the biopsy had actually removed all the cancer. Still, I can never get a tan again. Spending a day at the beach is my family's favorite summer activity, but now, I'll be that person under the umbrella covered up from head to toe—and so will my kids.

**“Skin cancer doesn’t happen to girls my age”**



**Jaime, 19, college student**

One day during my senior year in high school, I noticed a new mole on my right

cheek. Every time I pointed it out to my dermatologist, she said it was nothing; that skin cancer doesn't

happen to girls my age, or to African Americans. What's more, I hate the sun, so my risk was incredibly low. I switched to a new dermatologist and when I showed him the mole, he wanted to biopsy it. I started to cry—Ronald Reagan's daughter had just died from melanoma, and it

had gotten a lot of media attention, so I knew how serious this could be. A plastic surgeon removed the mole and sent it to a lab. Then, a week later, I got the results: The biopsy was positive for melanoma and more surgery was required to make sure it had not spread. Luckily, it hadn't. Now, besides having an inch-long scar on my cheek, I have to get a body scan every six months for the rest of my life, because my risk of recurrence is so high. The dermatologist looks everywhere. It's not fun. When you're 19, you should feel immortal—but I don't.

**“My dermatologist told me it was just a pimple, it wasn't.”**



**Stephanie, 30, financial product specialist**

When I was 27, I noticed a round, raised mole with

white surface on my nose. My dermatologist told me it was just a pimple. I picked at it and squeezed it, but it only grew larger. Eventually, my doctor ordered a biopsy that came out negative. My boyfriend thought I was crazy to

obsess about it, but it bothered me, so I decided to see a plastic surgeon about removing it. He recommended a deeper biopsy, because he'd seen a similar lesion turn out to be cancerous. I'd been worried about the mark all that time, but I was still floored when the test results revealed basal-cell carcinoma, a kind of skin cancer that, fortunately, is highly treatable. I ended up having a quarter-size chunk of my nose cut away to remove all of it. There's more: The plastic surgeon took skin from my forehead to restore my nose. Now, 10 months later, I have a scar from my forehead to my nostril, but it's less noticeable every day. The doctors say I have a high chance of getting more skin cancer, since this type is related to abusing the sun, which I've done my whole life. I love the outdoors, but now, I have to look at the sun as my enemy.

**53,600 cases of skin cancer expected to be diagnosed in 2002 could have been prevented with protection from the sun.**

## TOP RISK FACTORS:

Have three or more of the following attributes? You are at high risk for skin cancer. But no matter how few you have, be smart—wear SPF 15 every day.

**FAIR SKIN, WITH BLUE OR GREEN EYES AND RED OR BLONDE HAIR SKIN THAT BURNS BEFORE IT TANS EXPERIENCING THREE OR MORE PAINFUL SUNBURNS AS A CHILD HAVING 30 OR MORE MOLES A FAMILY HISTORY OF SKIN CANCER**

**4 percent of people would be less likely to die from melanoma if they did regular skin checks.**