

## **Sunburns Up; Which State Is Worst? Surveys Show the Percentage of Sunburned U.S. Adults Is on the Rise**

Sunburns are becoming more common among U.S. adults, and with the summer season starting, it's time to brush up on sun protection, says the CDC.

The CDC today spotlighted America's sunburn statistics -- and what to do to avoid sunburns.

The percentage of sunburned U.S. adults rose from 31.8% in 1999 to 33.7% in 2004, based on three national surveys conducted in 1999, 2003, and 2004.

In those surveys, sunburns were rarest in Arizona adults in 1999 and most common in Utah in 2004. (A state-by-state list of results from the 2004 survey appears later in this article.)

As expected, sunburns were most common among whites and least common among Blacks, Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and American Indians/Native Alaskans also reported sunburns, though they often aren't considered at high risk.

### **Prevent Sunburns**

Sunburns aren't just uncomfortable. Getting sunburned even once can make you more likely to get skin cancer, according to the CDC, which offers these sunburn prevention tips:

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat.
- Cover up while in the sun.
- Seek the shade.
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses.
- Avoid the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.

### **Sunburn Statistics**

The three surveys covered various health topics, including sunburns.

The 1999 survey included more than 153,000 adults. The 2003 survey included nearly 253,000 adults. The 2004 survey included more than 295,000 adults.

In telephone interviews, participants reported how many times they had gotten sunburned -- even on a small part of their skin -- during the previous year.

In all three surveys, roughly one in three adults said they'd been sunburned in the previous year.

Those who sunburned tended to burn several times. Two-thirds of adults reporting sunburns said they'd gotten sunburned more than once in the previous year.

Sunburns were more common among men than among women. That may be due to time spent outdoors or greater sun protection among women, notes the CDC.

### **Sunburns, State by State**

The CDC lists the percentage of white adults in each state and U.S. territory who reported getting sunburned at least once in the previous year.

Here is that list for 2004, the most recent year for which state statistics are available. States with the same percentage are ranked together. Hawaii and Guam didn't report sunburn statistics in the 2004 survey.

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|-----|-------------------------------|-----|--|
| 1.  | U.S. Virgin Islands:<br>50.1% | 12. | Missouri: 45.2%                        |
| 2.  | Utah: 49.9%                   | 13. | Colorado: 45.1%                        |
| 3.  | Minnesota: 48.7%              | 14. | Montana: 44.1%                         |
| 4.  | Wisconsin: 48.6%              | 15. | Maryland: 43.9%                        |
| 5.  | Idaho: 48.5%                  | 16. | New Hampshire: 43.8%                   |
| 6.  | Wyoming: 48.3%                | 17. | Iowa, Oregon, and<br>Washington: 43.6% |
| 7.  | Vermont: 47.1%                | 18. | Ohio: 43.4%                            |
| 8.  | Nebraska: 46.9%               | 19. | Indiana: 43.3%                         |
| 9.  | North Dakota: 46.4%           | 20. | Connecticut: 43.1%                     |
| 10. | South Dakota: 46.1%           | 21. | Arkansas and Virginia:<br>42.9%        |
| 11. | Michigan: 45.6%               | 22. | Pennsylvania: 42.7%                    |

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| 23. | Maine and<br>Massachusetts: 42.6% | 34.        | Georgia: 39.2%              |
| 24. | Arizona: 42.1%                    | 35.        | Rhode Island: 38.7%         |
| 25. | Illinois: 41.7%                   | 36.        | Nevada: 38.3%               |
| 26. | South Carolina: 41.6%             | 37.        | West Virginia: 38%          |
| 27. | Oklahoma: 41.5%                   | 38.        | Florida and Texas:<br>37.7% |
| 28. | Delaware and Kansas:<br>41.4%     | <b>39.</b> | <b>California: 34.8%</b>    |
| 29. | New Mexico: 41.3%                 | 40.        | Alaska: 34.1%               |
| 30. | Mississippi: 40.5%                | 41.        | Tennessee: 32.6%            |
| 31. | New Jersey and New<br>York: 40.2% | 42.        | Louisiana: 30.5%            |
| 32. | Washington, D.C.:<br>40.1%        | 43.        | North Carolina: 28.1%       |
| 33. | Alabama: 39.6%                    | 44.        | Kentucky: 27%               |
|     |                                   | 45.        | Puerto Rico: 14.2%          |

The data don't show whether those people got sunburned in their home state or elsewhere, whether they got burned by the sun or in a tanning bed, or what (if any) sun protection they were using at the time.

The results appear in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

<http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/news/20070531/sunburns-up-which-state-is-worst>