# Jimmy Buffett Fought Rare Skin Cancer for Years Before Death

The “Margaritaville” singer’s lust for life never wavered during the four years he was being treated for Merkel cell carcinoma.

September 6, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

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“Margaritaville” singer Jimmy Buffett died last week at age 76 of Merkel cell carcinoma, a rare skin cancer, for which he’d been receiving treatment for four years, according to a statement on Buffett’s official website.

Buffett went into hospice last Monday and died Friday, September 1, surrounded by his loved ones and six dogs in Sag Harbor, Long Island. “He lived his life like a song till the very last breath and will be missed beyond measure by so many,” the statement read.

Merkel cell carcinoma (MCC) is a rare, aggressive type of skin cancer; only about 3,000 new cases are diagnosed annually in the United States. The disease occurs when Merkel cells, located deep in the top layer of skin, grow out of control. Risk factors for MCC include exposure to natural or artificial sunlight, being over age 50 and having a weak immune system, according to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

“He continued to perform during treatment, playing his last show, a surprise appearance in Rhode Island, in early July,” according to the statement.

Buffett’s songs, including “It’s Five O’Clock Somewhere” and “Come Monday,” evoked an eternal summer, and the popular singer filled arenas for decades. His successful “Margaritaville” lifestyle brand, which included hotels, restaurants and Buffett-themed tropical merchandise, earned the entrepreneur billionaire status.

Thousands of Buffett’s fans, who call themselves Parrotheads, and numerous celebrities paid tribute to the music legend upon learning about his death. Residents of Key West, Florida, where Buffett lived for many years, held a parade Sunday evening.

Paul McCartney recalled heartfelt memories the musicians shared together. “He had a most amazing lust for life and a beautiful sense of humor,” McCartney posted on his official Instagram.

“So long, Jim. You are a very special man and friend, and it was a great privilege to get to know you and love you.”



View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Paul McCartney (@paulmccartney)

In lieu of flowers, the Buffett family asked that donations be made to Jimmy Buffett’s Foundation Singing for Change, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute or the MD Anderson Cancer Center.

To learn more, click #Skin Cancer, or check out Cancer Health’s Basics on Skin Cancer. It reads in part:

> What is skin cancer?
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> Cancer develops when cells grow out of control. Skin cancer is the most frequently diagnosed type of cancer. Basal and squamous cell skin cancers are most common and are usually treatable. Melanoma is less common but more likely to spread and become life-threatening. Other cancers that affect the skin include Merkel cell carcinoma, some types of lymphoma and Kaposi sarcoma. (See separate Basics about melanoma, lymphoma and Kaposi sarcoma.)
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> Melanoma affects melanocytes, or pigment-producing cells in the skin. Merkel cell carcinoma involves neuroendocrine cells in the skin. Kaposi sarcoma, a cancer of the lining of blood and lymph vessels, can occur anywhere in the body but often appears as skin lesions.

What are the symptoms of skin cancer?

Unusual changes in the skin may be a sign of skin cancer. Signs of squamous and basal cell cancer may include:

-Pale or yellow flat patches that resemble scars

-Red, scaly or itchy patches

-Shiny pink or red or pearly bumps

-Growths with raised edges and a depression in the center

-Open sores with oozing or crusted areas

-Sores that don’t heal or keeping coming back

-Wart-like growths.

Some squamous and basal cell cancers are flat and look similar to normal skin. New or changing moles may be a sign of melanoma and should be reported to your doctor.

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http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/jimmy-buffett-fought-rare-skin-cancer-years-death