



## TIPS FOR REDUCING YOUR RISK FOR CANCER

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- **Don't use tobacco.** About one-fourth of all cancers are related to tobacco use. Smoking has been linked to several cancer types, including lung, oral, bladder, esophageal, throat, and laryngeal cancers. Heavy smokers and those who began smoking at a young age are at an increased risk of developing the disease. Second-hand smoke exposure puts non-smokers at risk as well.
- **Limit alcohol intake.** If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation (if at all). Excessive alcohol consumption increases your risk for certain types of cancer, such as oral, throat, pharyngeal, laryngeal, esophageal, kidney, liver, colorectal, and breast cancers.
- **Protect your skin from the sun.** Skin cancer is one of the most common types of cancer. Try to minimize your time in the sun. Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, and wear a hat and protective clothing/eyewear. Do not use indoor tanning beds or sunlamps. Also, be aware of any changes to your skin, like moles or other marks, and discuss these changes with your doctor.
- **Maintain a healthy diet and weight.** Eating well and maintaining a healthy weight for your body may help to reduce your risk of certain cancers, such as colon, esophageal, kidney and stomach cancers. Eat a well-balanced diet, including five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Avoid foods high in saturated fat, sugar and salt. A dietitian can help you design a nutritious meal plan.
- **Stay active.** Regular exercise may play a role in cancer prevention. Physical activity may lower your risk of cancers of the breast, colon, uterus, and prostate. It can also help you increase your energy and avoid obesity. A rehabilitation therapist can help you develop a safe exercise program to meet your individual needs.
- **Get regular screening tests.** Your doctor may recommend routine self-examinations and screening tests to detect early signs of cancer, such as cervical, breast, skin, oral, colon and prostate cancers. Your doctor may also recommend immunizations to protect against viruses that may lead to certain cancers. Follow-up visits with your doctor can help identify any changes in your medical condition.
- **Be aware of dangerous life styles and environmental hazards.** Risky behaviors and excessive exposure to certain environmental substances (e.g., asbestos, benzene, radon, ionizing radiation) may increase your risk for cancer. Seek help for addictions and discuss your concerns about hazards in your workplace with your employer. Have your home tested for radon levels. Follow health and safety procedures, such as wearing protective clothing, to control your exposure to environmental hazards.
- **Reduce your stress.** Ongoing stress can weaken your immune system and make you susceptible to infection. It's important to find ways to reduce stress, such as relaxation techniques, distraction, and meditation. Spiritual counselors and/or support groups can help you manage stress as well.
- **Review your medical and family history.** Knowledge also plays a role in cancer prevention. Understanding your family history can help you understand your hereditary risk for cancer so you can make informed healthcare decisions. You may decide to go for genetic counseling and testing. The decision to undergo genetic testing is a personal one, and you should consider the pros and cons of testing beforehand.

*This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical guidance.  
Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider prior to making decisions about your medical care.*