



National Cancer Prevention Awareness Month

February is National Cancer Prevention Month. Cancer affects 1 in 3 people in the United States. The human body is comprised of several cells that grow and divide, giving room for new cells to generate when the need occurs. An invasion of this normal process is what leads to cancer. Statistics indicate that you or someone you know has been affected by cancer. The choices that you make about diet, exercise, and other lifestyle habits can affect your overall health and your risk for developing cancer and other serious diseases.

Six tips to reduce cancer risk:

- **Don't use tobacco.** Smoking has been linked to many types of cancer, including lung, mouth, voice box, pancreas, bladder, cervix, and kidney cancers. Even being around secondhand smoke might increase the risk of lung cancer. Staying away from tobacco, or deciding to stop using it, is an important way to help prevent cancer.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Although eating healthy foods can't ensure cancer prevention, it might reduce the risk. Consider eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, drinking alcohol only in moderation, if at all, and limiting the amount of processed meats eaten which research shows slightly increases the risk of certain types of cancer.
- **Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active.** Being a healthy weight might lower the risk of some types of cancer. Doing any amount of physical activity also benefits health. For the most benefit, strive for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of hard aerobic activity. More is better.
- **Protect yourself from the sun.** Skin cancer is one of the most common kinds of cancer and one of the most preventable with UV protection.
- **Get vaccinated.** Protecting against certain viral infections can help protect against cancer. Talk to a health care provider about getting vaccinated against Hepatitis B as the virus can increase the risk of developing liver cancer and increase vulnerability to Human Papillomavirus (HPV).
- **Get regular medical care.** Doing regular self-exams and having screenings for cancers can raise the chances of finding cancer early.

The best way to prevent the spread of cancer and the emergence of related complications is by detecting the disease in its earliest and most treatable stages. Advanced technologies in medicine can find pre-cancerous changes and treat them before they progress to cancer. The risk for some cancers run in families. Learn about cancer incidence, including the disease type and age at diagnosis, among your relatives and share this information with your doctor. Your family history will help you and your doctor determine your cancer risk and develop a screening and prevention plan.

Resources:

- National Cancer Institute: [NCI Organization - NCI \(cancer.gov\)](https://www.nationalcancer.org/)
- American Cancer Society: [Cancer Screening Guidelines by Age | American Cancer Society](https://www.cancer.org/cancer/screenings/diagnosis/prevention/cancer-screening-guidelines-by-age.html)
- World Health Organization: [Preventing cancer \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer-prevention)

