



## February: National Cancer Prevention Month

February is National Cancer Prevention Month. There are more than 100 different forms of cancer that exist. Studies show that about one in every three Americans will develop cancer during their lifetime. One-third of all cancer deaths may be preventable if cancer screenings are followed, and healthy lifestyle modifications are made. This is a smart time to visit your doctor for an annual checkup and consider what types of preventative care are suitable for you.

### Recommended cancer screening tests:

- **Breast cancer screening.** Screening mammography has been shown to reduce deaths from breast cancer among women ages 40 to 74, but especially for those ages 50 to 69.
- **Cervical cancer screening.** HVP and Pap tests are generally recommended to begin at age 21 with regular screenings until about age 65.
- **Colorectal cancer screening.** Colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy screenings should begin at age 45. These screenings can find abnormal colon growths (polyps) that can be removed before they become cancer.
- **Lung cancer screening.** Low-dose helical computed tomography has been shown to reduce lung cancer deaths for current or former smokers. Screenings should occur for individuals ages 50-80.
- **Alpha-fetoprotein blood test.** This test, along with an ultrasound, may detect liver cancer early.

Although everybody is different and a lot of factors are involved in one's health journey, here are **five early cancer warning signs you shouldn't ignore:**

- **Unexplained weight loss.** If you experience a weight loss of 10 pounds or more for no reason at all, contact your doctor. This is often the first sign of cancer.
- **Extreme fatigue.** If your fatigue is severe enough to affect your quality of life, call your doctor.
- **Recurring fever** can have a possible connection to cancer. You should pay particular attention if:
  - \*A fever happens mostly at night.
  - \*You have no other signs of illness or infection.
  - \*You experience night sweats.
- **Persistent pain** that doesn't go away.
- **Skin changes** such as jaundice (yellowing of the eyes or fingertips) and changes in skin moles.

### Additional Resources:

- NIH: <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/screening/screening-tests#recommended-cancer-screening-tests>
- John Hopkins Medicine: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/early-cancer-warning-signs-5-symptoms-you-shouldnt-ignore>

