

WELL BALANCED

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Cancer Awareness

THE Power OF Prevention

Nearly everyone has been touched by cancer in some way—personally, through a loved one, or within their community. Cancer refers to a group of diseases in which abnormal cells grow uncontrollably, and its impact is felt around the world. According to the World Health Organization, the most common cancers worldwide are lung, breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer. Each year, cancer is responsible for roughly 10 million deaths. The encouraging news is that an estimated 30-50% of cancers may be preventable through greater awareness, healthier lifestyle choices, and reduced exposure to environmental risks.

Modifiable Risk Factors

Modifiable risk factors are behaviors or environmental exposures that can be changed or managed to help lower the risk of developing cancer. Some common cancer-related risk factors are listed below.



Did You Know?

The American Cancer Society reports that the evidence on the relationship between sleep and cancer risk remains inconclusive. Although research is ongoing, getting enough high-quality sleep is well-established as an important part of maintaining overall health.

Risk Factor	Why It Matters
Tobacco use	Tobacco use is linked to 20% of cancer and 30% of cancer deaths, making it the leading preventable cause of cancer. Secondhand smoke also increases cancer risk.
Alcohol consumption	Alcohol is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen and is linked to at least seven types of cancer.
Unhealthy diet	Diets low in fruits and vegetables and high in processed foods, added sugar, fat, and red meat can contribute to excess body weight, which increases cancer risk.
Physical inactivity	Too much sitting and screen time can increase cancer risk, even for people who are otherwise active.
Excessive body weight	Overweight and obesity are associated with increased risk for multiple cancers and are influenced by factors such as diet, physical activity, sleep, genetics, and environment.
Environmental and infectious exposures	Certain exposures, including UV rays, radiation, and air pollution, as well as infections such as HPV and hepatitis B, can increase cancer risk.

Prevention Strategies

The strategies below are general prevention tips and are not a complete list. Because each person and each type of cancer are unique, it is recommended to talk with a health care provider about what is right for you.

- **Aim for a healthy body weight.** The American Cancer Society recommends maintaining a healthy body weight and cultivating healthy habits to avoid weight gain in adulthood.
- **Stay physically active.** Aim for 150-300 minutes of moderate activity each week, and look for simple ways to move more and sit less, such as taking short walking breaks or choosing the stairs.
- **Choose a healthy eating pattern.** Focus on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, and other nutrient-dense foods. Limit red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened drinks, and highly processed foods.
- **Limit or avoid alcohol.** For cancer prevention, avoiding alcohol is recommended. If you do consume alcohol, limit your intake to no more than one drink per day for women or two for men.
- **Protect your skin from UV rays.** Reduce exposure to harmful ultraviolet radiation by wearing protective clothing, hats, and sunglasses; applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30; seeking shade when the sun is strongest; and avoiding tanning beds.
- **Talk with your health care provider.** Ask which vaccines are recommended for you and stay up to date on cancer screenings based on your age, health history, and risk factors.



Did You Know?

Cancer screening can help find certain cancers early, when treatment may work better. Screening recommendations vary by cancer type, age, sex, and risk factors. Consider talking to your health care provider about which screenings are right for you.

Reducing cancer risk starts with awareness and small, everyday choices that support long-term health. While not every cancer can be prevented, understanding your personal risk factors, staying up to date on recommended screenings, and talking with your health care provider can help you take proactive steps toward prevention and early detection.

Resources

- » American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer ([cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org))

Sources

- » <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/diet-physical-activity/acs-guidelines-nutrition-physical-activity-cancer-prevention.html>
- » <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer>
- » <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/understanding-cancer/what-is-cancer.html>
- » <https://www.cancerresearch.org/blog/cancer-prevention-month>

