

Know Your Risk

Having a risk factor does not necessarily mean you will develop cancer. Some people with one or more risk factors never develop the disease, while others with none get sick. **Common risk factors:**

Age. The chances of prostate and breast cancer increase with age.

Heredity. Family history plays a role in a person's susceptibility to certain diseases. **Smart move:** Talk about cancer and other health conditions with your family. Your family's health history is important to your health care provider and should be discussed during every routine checkup.



Tobacco use. Cancers of the lung, mouth, larynx, bladder, kidney, cervix, esophagus and pancreas are related to tobacco use, including cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco and snuff. Smoking alone causes one-third of all cancer deaths.

Smart move: Get support for quitting tobacco use, including prescription medication, over-the-counter nicotine replacement products such as patches and gum, and emotional support from your health care provider or a counseling group.

Alcohol consumption. Having three or more alcoholic drinks per day is a recognized cause of liver cancer.

Ultraviolet rays. Over time, excessive exposure to sunlight and tanning lamps can cause skin cancer. **Smart move:** Avoid prolonged sun exposure, even when wearing sunscreen. Limit sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., when the sun is strongest. Wear sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 (use 30 or higher for more protection), and shade your skin with a hat, long sleeves or a beach umbrella.

Diet. A diet high in fats and low in fruits and vegetables, such as one that includes large amounts of red meat, fried foods and high-fat dairy products, may increase your risks. **Smart move:** Trim fat from your diet by choosing lean cuts of meat, low-fat dairy products and cutting back on fried foods.

Cancer Fighters

Antioxidants: These substances — most commonly beta-carotene, vitamins C, E and A, and lycopene — occur naturally in many fruits and vegetables, nuts and grains. Research has suggested that antioxidants may slow or even prevent the development of cancer by protecting cells from the damage caused by unstable molecules known as free radicals, according to the National Cancer Institute.

Folic acid: This B-complex vitamin is found in many vegetables, beans, fruits, whole grains and some fortified breakfast cereals. Folic acid is especially important for the development of blood cells. It may reduce the risk of some cancers, although the amount needed to lower the risk is unknown. Low levels of folic acid have been associated with higher rates of colorectal cancer. **Good sources:** dark-green leafy vegetables, citrus fruit, poultry, liver and fortified grain-based cereals.

Quitting bad habits: Quitting smoking and limiting alcohol consumption help your health overall.

Regular exercise: Physical activity not only helps protect you from cancer, but you'll feel better, have more energy, lose weight and strengthen your heart and body. The American Cancer Society recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity five or more days per week. Getting active for 45 minutes or more offers even more protection. Pressed for time? Even 10-minute bouts of moderate exercise help. **Ideas:** Join a bicycle club. Walk the dog or a neighbor's dog. Start jumping rope.



The bottom line: Be proactive about screenings and taking care of yourself. Keep this pamphlet for quick reference about when to get screening tests. Share it with a friend or family member.

CANCER CONTROL

SCREENINGS & RISK FACTORS



EMPHASIS: AWARENESS

You or someone you know likely has been affected by cancer. The National Cancer Institute estimates that nearly 9 million Americans have a personal history of cancer. An estimated 1,500 people die from it each day.

Though the statistics sound alarming, millions of people are winning the battle against cancer. With your health care provider's help, you can identify your risk factors, lower them and possibly reduce your chances of developing the disease.

Medical experts say being aware of your family's health history, making lifestyle changes when necessary and getting routine checkups plus screening tests greatly improve your chances of early detection. In many cases, finding cancer early increases your chances for survival.



CANCER: How It Happens

Cells are your body's basic unit of life. The body is made up of many types of cells. Cells normally grow and divide, and new cells are produced as needed to keep your body healthy and functioning properly.

But sometimes the cell-building process goes awry and more new cells than are needed form. The mass of extra cells forms a growth or tumor that can be either malignant (cancerous and invasive) or benign (noncancerous and rarely life threatening).

Did You Know?

Most people are aware of the increased heart disease and diabetes risks posed by obesity. But not many know that their risk of cancer also increases with weight gain, according to the American Institute for Cancer Research. More than 60 percent of Americans are overweight. On a global scale, the World Health Organization estimates that one-third of cancer cases worldwide are due to obesity and physical inactivity.

A GUIDE TO CANCER SCREENINGS

This exam schedule is recommended by the American Cancer Society. It is intended as a guide only, and you should discuss your own personal screening schedule with your health care provider. If you have a family history of certain diseases or other risk factors for cancer, your provider may recommend screening at a younger age or more often.



women

AGE	BREAST	MAMMOGRAPHY
20-39	Discuss breast self-awareness with your provider; exam at least every 3 years	N/A for most
40+	Self-awareness; yearly exam by provider	Yearly

AGE	PAP/PELVIC
18-21	Within 3 years of starting sexual intercourse or by age 21; then annually
30+	Annually or after 3 normal tests in a row, screen every 2-3 years

Breast Cancer Awareness

Research has shown that self-awareness is important in early detection of breast cancer. Self-awareness means knowing what your breasts normally feel like and look like, being attuned to any change and bringing any change to the attention of your doctor right away. Performing a breast self-exam, or BSE, increases self-awareness.

SCREENINGS provide the earliest detection for cancers that can, when left unchecked and untreated, shorten your life. Cancer screenings can be worked into your regular health care routine. How often you receive cancer screenings depends on your personal and family medical history and risk factors.

Colorectal Cancer Awareness

Colorectal cancer, also called colon cancer and cancer of the rectum, is the second leading cancer killer, in general equally affecting men and women 50 years of age and older. If colorectal cancer is detected early enough, however, the chance for survival is more than 90 percent.

men & women

AGE	COLORECTAL	SKIN CANCER/MOLE EXAM
20-39	N/A	Monthly self-exam; skin exam on the occasion of health exam by provider
40-49	N/A	Monthly self-exam; skin exam on the occasion of health exam by provider
50+	Thorough testing* every 5-10 years; fecal test annually	Monthly self-exam; skin exam on the occasion of health exam by provider

* **Note:** Testing may include a colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, double-contrast barium enema and fecal occult exam.

Skin Cancer & Mole Awareness

Skin self-awareness is key. Check your body for moles and pigmented (dark) spots, and watch the moles you already have for changes in size, color, texture or appearance. When conducting a self-exam, don't forget to check your ear lobes, neck, scalp, underarms, soles of your feet and between your toes. Use a mirror to check your back.

men

AGE	PROSTATE	TESTICULAR
20-39	N/A	Increase self-awareness; exam by provider on occasion of periodic health exam
40-49	Screening at 40 if at high risk, including being of African-American descent or having a first-degree relative — a father or brother — diagnosed with prostate cancer at a young age; follow-up screening may be recommended by your provider	Self-awareness; exam by provider on occasion of periodic health exam
50+	PSA test and digital rectal exam discussion or screening annually for men of average risk	Self-awareness; exam by provider on occasion of periodic health exam