

## Ways to Prevent the Risk for Cancer and Catch Cancer Early

Editorial Comment.

The possibility of getting cancer is affected by many factors, including age, lifestyle, weight, environmental factors, and family history and genetic predisposition. Some things cannot be controlled. However, 12 helpful measures that can lower risk for cancer are in the following.

- **Quit smoking.** Tobacco use increases the risk for many kinds of cancer and other diseases such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. Quitting smoking can lower risk for cancer<sup>[1,2]</sup>
- **Vaccinate.** The human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine is recommended for anyone between 9 and 45 years old. It helps prevent multiple kinds of cancer, including cervical, anal, and head and neck.<sup>[3,4]</sup> The hepatitis B vaccine helps prevent liver cancer<sup>[5]</sup>
- **Avoid direct sun exposure.** Ultraviolet radiation from the sun's rays can cause skin cancer, including basal, squamous, and melanoma. Use sunscreen with SPF of 30 or higher when outside. Do not use tanning beds and lamps<sup>[6]</sup>
- **Exercise.** Overweight and an inactive lifestyle are associated with increased cancer risk. Two to four hours of moderate-to-hard physical activity every week can lower the risk of cancer<sup>[7]</sup>
- **Eat healthy.** Studies have linked red and processed meats to colorectal cancer risk. Diets high in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, and low in red and processed meats are linked with lower colorectal cancer risk<sup>[8-10]</sup>
- **Avoid alcohol intake.** Alcohol raises the risk for oral, throat, esophageal, liver, breast, and colon cancers. Even 3 to 4 drinks a week increase the risk for cancer. Make informed decisions about when and how much you drink<sup>[11]</sup>
- **Lung cancer.** If you smoke now or you are a former smoker or have a history of exposure to secondhand smoke over 55, you should consult an internist about screening to catch cancer early<sup>[12]</sup>
- **Colorectal cancer.** Yearly testing of a sample of bowel movement or a colonoscopy every 10 years after 45 years can catch colorectal cancer and pre-cancers early<sup>[13]</sup>
- **Breast cancer.** Get a yearly mammogram if you are a woman of over 45. If you have a known BRCA mutation or other factors linked to increased risk, you should start getting a yearly mammogram at age 30<sup>[14]</sup>
- **Skin cancer.** Watch your skin for changes in size, appearance, or number of moles you have. A biopsy from a dermatologist can tell if it is cancer
- **Cervical cancer.** Every 3 years, women over 21 should have the Pap test. After age 30, women should get both the Pap and HPV test every 3-5 years<sup>[15]</sup>

- **Prostate cancer.** Risk factors for prostate cancer are different for each man based on family history and ethnicity. Men over 45 who are at higher risk should be tested.<sup>[16]</sup>

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