

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



FEBRUARY 2025

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

CAN YOU STOP CANCER BEFORE IT STARTS?



The Red Cross, the American Association for Cancer Research, and other groups recognize February as National Cancer Prevention Month, a time to tell people about ways you can fight cancer.

For many years, we thought you got cancer just by chance, bad luck, or only because of family traits or certain behaviors. Now we have more research. We know more about what causes cancer. We know how a person's life and environment can play a major role in keeping away cancer. There are things you can do to cut the odds of getting cancer. This will lower the overall rate of cancers moving forward.

The National Cancer Institute says prevention and testing efforts have been the major factors to saving lives, stopping 4.75 million deaths from

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by being active for at least

150 minutes per week.

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five of the most common cancers (breast, lung, colorectal, cervical, and prostate) from 1975 to 2020. The number of lives saved keeps growing yearly as more people learn how they can prevent cancer or find cancer early while it is most treatable.

Testing

Cancer screenings can look for signs of disease before you have warnings. Some screenings can even look for signs that cancer could likely grow later. All people should be screened for the most common types of cancer (breast, cervical, colorectal). You might need extra or earlier screenings if a parent or family member has cancer, or if you have been exposed to certain other risks.

Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol

Tobacco use is a risk for many cancer types, as is drinking too much alcohol. If you do not smoke or drink, do not start. If you use tobacco products, try to quit. There are many ways to help you quit. Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or local health department. If you drink alcohol, stay within the recommended limit of one drink per day for women or up to two drinks per day for men.

Keep a healthy weight

Obesity is also a cancer risk. You can cut your risk for cancer by reaching and keeping a healthy body weight. Eating a wide variety of healthy

food and being active can help reach a healthy body weight. Talk to your doctor about what is a healthy body weight for you, and how to reach it.

Eat healthy foods

Eating a diet of mostly vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and lean proteins limits your cancer risk, and gives your body fuel to feel its best.

Be active

Our bodies are made to move. Cut your cancer risk by being active for at least 150 minutes per week.

Protect your skin

Skin cancer is still a leading cancer in the United States. Limit sun exposure by using sun screen, SPF clothing, and sunglasses. Be careful of spending too much time in direct sunlight. Avoid tanning beds.

Cooperative Extension has a wide variety of information on cancer. Talk to your local Extension agent for more tips about the basics of cancer, cutting your cancer risks, and living a healthy life.

REFERENCE:

<https://prevention.cancer.gov>

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