

Feel Well

Reduce your risk of cancer.

There are no proven ways to prevent cancer, but you can reduce your risk of getting it. According to Cancer Research UK, 4 in 10 cancer cases can be prevented largely through lifestyle changes.



Reduce your risk

You can lower your risk of cancer if you:

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Stay physically active
- Drink less alcohol
- Stop smoking
- Protect your skin from sun damage

The importance of diet

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is thought to be one of the best ways of lowering your risk of developing cancer. You should eat a diet containing:

- At least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- Plenty of bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods – choose wholegrain varieties where possible as these contain more fibre
- Some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- Some milk and dairy foods
- Just a small amount of foods and drinks high in fat or sugars

Red and processed meats

Meat is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals. However, evidence shows there is probably a link between eating red and processed meat and the risk of bowel cancer. People who eat a lot of these meats have a higher risk of getting bowel cancer than people who eat small amounts. Beef, pork and lamb are red meats. Processed meats include bacon, sausages, salami and ham.

Give up smoking

If you smoke, giving up is the single most important thing you can do for your health.

In the UK about 1 in 5 cancers, and more than 1 in 4 cancer deaths, are linked to smoking. It increases the risk of many cancers, including cancers of the mouth, throat, lung, bladder, kidney, pancreas, bowel, stomach and cervix.

Breathing in other people's smoke (passive smoking) also increases your risk of developing cancer.

Limit how much alcohol you drink

Drinking alcohol, especially more than the recommended limits, can increase your cancer risk. About 4 in 100 cancers in the UK are linked to alcohol.

Alcohol increases the risk of cancers of the mouth and throat. It is also linked to cancers of the bowel, liver and breast. In general, the more you drink, the higher your risk. NHS guidelines suggest that both men and women should:

- not regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol in a week
- spread the alcohol units they drink in a week over three or more days
- try to have at least two alcohol-free days every week

A unit of alcohol is half a pint of ordinary strength beer, lager or cider, one small glass (125ml) of wine or a single measure (25ml) of spirits.

There is more information about alcohol and drinking guidelines on the Drinkaware website.

Know your body

It is important to know your body and recognise any potential symptoms of cancer, such as lumps or unexplained bleeding, and to get advice from your GP about whether they might be of concern.



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