

Lifestyle Changes to Reduce Risk of Cancer

How much do lifestyle choices like diet and exercise affect your risk for cancer? More than you might think. According to the American Cancer Society, poor diet and not being physically active are key factors that can increase a person's cancer risk. The good news is that you can do something about it.

Use the following lifestyle changes to help reduce your risk of cancer and other diseases. Remember to always consult with your doctor before making any changes in your diet or exercise routine. They can help you find the right combination of diet and exercise to meet your individual needs.

Choose Healthy Foods

A high-calorie diet increases the risk of obesity and has been shown to increase the risk of developing some cancers. Eating foods rich in vitamins and fiber and low in fat can help you maintain healthy body weight and reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease and other conditions.

The American Cancer Society and the American Institute for Cancer Research recommend making the following dietary changes to reduce the risk of cancer:

- **Eat more fruits and vegetables:** Eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables per day to reduce the risk of some cancers, including lung, prostate, bladder, esophageal, colon, breast and stomach cancers. When counting your servings, remember that one serving equals: ½ cup of raw or cooked fruits and vegetables; one cup of raw or leafy vegetables; or a medium-sized piece of fresh fruit.
- **Limit animal products:** Reduce your consumption of animal products, especially red meat. Choose fish or poultry instead. One, 3-ounce serving (about the size of a deck of cards) of red meat daily contains enough nutrients to maintain your healthy diet.
- **Eat more grains:** Replace processed grains and sugars with whole grains (such as whole-wheat bread and brown rice) and legumes (such as dried peas and beans). Processed food lacks vital nutrients that your body needs. Foods rich in fiber can decrease your risk of colon cancer. Try to eat seven servings of these healthy alternatives per day. Remember that one serving equals: one slice of bread; ½ cup of legumes; or ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta.
- **Reduce salt:** Limit your salt intake by reducing the number of processed foods and meats you eat. Salt can increase the risk of esophageal and stomach cancer as well as increase the risk of high blood pressure and stroke. Try to limit your daily salt intake to 2,400 mg.
- **Reduce your alcohol intake:** While moderate alcohol consumption does provide some health benefits, excessive consumption is linked to an increased risk of mouth, larynx and liver cancer.

Tips to Help Change Your Eating Habits

Changing your eating habits is not easy, but the benefits far outweigh any difficulties that you may experience. The following suggestions can help you maintain a healthy diet:

- **Substitute ingredients:** There are many lower-fat ingredients that you can substitute in your favorite recipes. The following ingredients can be substituted with only slight taste alterations: low-fat yogurt for sour cream; unsalted butter or margarine for butter; or two egg whites for one whole egg.
- **Decrease portion size:** Cooking smaller portions at home can help you stick to your new diet plan. When eating out, try splitting your meal into two portions and boxing up one portion immediately. This will allow you to clean your plate without feeling guilty for eating too much.
- **Eat more often:** Spreading out your daily intake can help keep your metabolism going, maintain your energy level and reduce feelings of hunger.
- **Change cooking methods:** Try steaming or baking foods instead of frying. Grilling foods can be a healthy alternative if you allow the fat to drain and if you avoid charring the food.

Exercise Regularly

Regular exercise offers many health and emotional benefits and can help to prevent heart disease as well as certain cancers.

Regular exercise, along with a healthy diet, can also help you to maintain a healthy body weight, which can boost your self-confidence and reduce your risk of obesity.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines:

- **Adults:** Engage in moderate exercise for 30 minutes or more each day. You can break the exercise sessions into two 15 minute sessions or three 10 minute sessions. Some ways that you can incorporate exercise into your daily routine include brisk walking, swimming, gardening, housework and taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- **Children:** Engage in moderate or vigorous exercise for 60 minutes or more each day. Sessions can be broken into periods of 10 to 15 minutes. Some examples of vigorous exercise include swimming, bicycling, running or most sports activities.

Stop Smoking

Tobacco, in any form, is the leading cause of lung, mouth and throat cancer. Smoking has also been linked to lung, larynx, pharynx, esophageal, mouth, pancreatic, bladder and cervical cancer.

Quitting smoking can add years to your life, improve your appearance and improve your overall health. It can also reduce your risk of cancer and other diseases such as heart disease, lung disease and cardiovascular disease.

Resources

For more information about the different types of cancer, prevention strategies and treatment options, contact the American Cancer Society by visiting www.cancer.org.

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-5465

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID: LivingME

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