



6 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF DEATH FROM CANCER

While you cannot always prevent cancer, recent research and long-term studies point to these six things individuals can do to limit their risk of getting cancer and to make cancer less deadly when it does develop.

1 Avoid tobacco

Tobacco causes nearly 1 in 5 deaths, or about 480,000 premature deaths each year.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States.

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States.

Smokers are **25 times more likely to develop cancer** than non-smokers.

- Besides lung cancer, tobacco use increases risk for cancers of the mouth, lips, nose and sinuses, larynx, throat, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, kidney, bladder, uterus, cervix, colon/rectum, ovary, and acute myeloid leukemia.
- Smokeless tobacco products increase the risk of developing cancer of the mouth and throat, esophagus and pancreas.
- While e-cigarettes are potentially less harmful than combusted cigarettes (long-term effects unknown), **nicotine exposure at a young age may cause lasting harm** to brain development.

2 Maintain healthy weight

Being overweight contributes to as many as 1 in 5 cancer-related deaths.

It is not known exactly how weight affects cancer risk, but there is clearly a causal effect between being overweight and developing cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends people be as lean as possible without being underweight.

Being overweight is clearly linked with an increased risk of many cancers, including:

- Breast (in women past menopause)
- Colon and rectum
- Endometrium (lining of the uterus)
- Esophagus
- Kidney
- Pancreas



3 Eat a healthy diet

There is strong evidence that eating a healthy diet can help lower cancer risk.

Eating to reduce cancer risk is a combination of avoiding detrimental foods and choosing beneficial foods.

- Control portion size
- Avoid high heat grilling/charring of meat
- No more than 18 oz. per week of red meats (beef, pork, lamb)
- Avoid processed meats
- Limit fatty meats, high-fat dairy and processed foods
- Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits (2 ½ cups per day)
- Choose whole grains instead of refined
- Choose foods high in carotenoids (look for red, orange, yellow and dark green)
- Seek foods rich in antioxidants and beta-carotene
- Get adequate Vitamin D (400 to 600 IU daily for most adults)

4 Get adequate exercise

An hour of walking a day can lower risk of death by 39%.

Studies by the US Department of Health and Human Services, American Cancer

Society and National Cancer Institute show that regular exercise lowers the risk of developing cancer.

- People who got at least 2.5 hours of moderate intensity exercise or 1.25 hours of vigorous exercise weekly lowered their risk of death by 31% compared to those getting no exercise.
- Getting 3 to 5 times the amount of recommended physical activity lowers risk of death by 39% compared to those getting no exercise. To get the maximum benefit: **Walk an hour a day, bike 5 hours a week or run 2.25 hours a week.**

5 Get recommended screenings and vaccinations

We need to use the tools science has developed.

Vaccines can prevent cancer, and screenings can help detect cancer at an earlier stage when it is easier to treat, improving survival.

BREAST

- 20s, begin self exams
- 20s-30s, clinical exam every 3 years
- 40+, yearly mammogram

COLON (50+)

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years, or

colonoscopy every 10 years, or double-contrast barium enema every 5 years, or CT colonography every 5 years

- Yearly guaiac-based fecal occult blood test, or yearly fecal immunochemical test, or stool DNA test, every 3 years

CERVIX

- HPV vaccine administered during adolescence
- 21-29 yrs.: Pap test every 3 years; 30-65 yrs.: Pap test plus an HPV test every 5 years; 65+: no need to test for cervical cancer

PROSTATE

- Only those at high risk should be tested at 50+

6 Limit alcohol consumption

Even a moderate amount of alcohol is “clearly linked” to an increased risk of cancer.

- Alcohol raises the risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, esophagus, liver, breast, and the colon and rectum.
- Recommended consumption: **2 drinks per day for men**
1 drink per day for women

HOPE IS IN THE NUMBERS

Researchers followed 476,396 men and women, 50-71, for more than 10 years. Those who most closely followed American Cancer Society guidelines outlined in this newsletter had these results:

- Men had a 25% reduced risk of dying from cancer and 10% reduced risk of developing cancer
- Women had a 24% reduced risk of dying from cancer and 19% reduced risk of developing cancer

Sources:

<http://www.cancer.org>
<http://www.aicr.org/>

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 Like us for information about Dr. Perez and cancer care. Search “Sierra Nevada Cancer.”

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