

# Prevention and Screening



## Healthy Choices for Cancer Prevention

*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.* You can lower your risk of getting cancer by making healthy choices like **avoiding tobacco**, **protecting your skin**, **limiting alcohol intake**, **maintaining a healthy weight**, and **getting recommended screenings on time**.

### Avoid Tobacco

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death, and cigarette smoking causes almost all cases. Compared to nonsmokers, current smokers are about 25 times more likely to die from lung cancer. Smoking causes between 80-90 percent of lung cancer deaths. Smoking also causes cancer of the mouth and throat, esophagus, stomach, colon, rectum, liver, pancreas, voice box (larynx), trachea, bronchus, kidney and renal pelvis, urinary bladder, and cervix, and causes acute myeloid leukemia.

Adults who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their risk of developing lung cancer by 20-30 percent. Concentrations of many cancer-causing and toxic chemicals are actually higher in secondhand smoke than in the smoke inhaled by smokers.

### Protect Your Skin

Skin cancer is the most common kind of cancer in the United States. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun and tanning beds appears to be the most important environmental factor involved with developing skin cancer. To help prevent skin cancer while still having fun outdoors, protect yourself by seeking shade, applying sunscreen, and wearing sun-protective clothing, a hat, and sunglasses.

### Limit Alcohol Intake

Studies around the world have shown drinking alcohol increases the risk of getting mouth, larynx, and throat cancers. A large number of studies provide strong evidence that drinking alcohol is a risk factor for primary liver cancer, and more than 100 studies have found an increased risk of breast cancer with increasing alcohol intake. Additionally, the link between alcohol consumption and colorectal (colon) cancer has been reported in more than 50 studies.

### Maintain a Healthy Weight

Research has shown that being overweight or having obesity raises a person's risk of getting certain cancers, including endometrial (uterine), breast in postmenopausal women, and colorectal cancers. Overweight is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 25 to 29, and obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 or higher.

### Get Recommended Screenings on Time

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supports screening for colorectal (colon), lung, breast, and cervical cancers as recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Recommendations can be found at [uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org](http://uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org). Additionally, the CDC recommends anyone who was born between 1945 and 1965 get tested for Hepatitis C. Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver, which is most often caused by a virus. In the United States, the most common type of viral hepatitis is Hepatitis C. Over time, chronic Hepatitis C can lead to serious liver problems including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver failure, or liver cancer.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov)*