

Cancer:

How Can I Protect Myself and Family From Cancer?



Cancer is the general name for a group of more than 100 diseases in which cells in a part of the body begin to grow out of control. Although there are many types of cancer, they all start because of abnormal cell growth. Cancer is a common disease and it causes about 1 out of 5 deaths in the US. About 50% of all men and 33% of all women will develop cancer during their lifetime.

No one knows the exact cause of most cases of cancer. We know that certain changes in our cells can cause cancer to start. The process that happens in the cells is generally different for each type of cancer. Of every 20 cases of cancer, about 1 is linked to genes that are inherited from parents.



There is no sure way to prevent cancer, but there are things we all can do to reduce our risk of getting it:

- **Stay away from tobacco:** Smokers are at higher risk for lung cancer. Everyone who is exposed to secondhand smoke is also at higher risk for cancer and other diseases.
- **Maintain a healthy weight throughout life:** Being overweight or obese increases the risk of several cancers. Excess weight can cause the body to produce and circulate more estrogen and insulin which can stimulate cancer growth.
- **Adopt a physically active lifestyle:** Adults should engage in 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity on 5 or more days of the week. Children and adolescents should engage in 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity at least 5 days per week.
- **Eat a healthy diet with an emphasis on plant sources:** Eat 5 or more servings of a variety of vegetables and fruits each day. Choose whole grains and limit intake of processed and red meats.
- **If you drink alcoholic beverages, limit your intake:** Drink no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men.
- **Find cancer early:** Screening increases the chances of detecting certain cancers early when they are most likely to be curable. Learn recommended screening tests on the American Cancer Society's website: www.cancer.org.
- **Stay safe in the sun:** Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers. It accounts for nearly ½ of all cancers in the U.S. The best way to lower your risk of skin cancer is to:
 - Avoid the sun between 10 in the morning and 4 in the afternoon
 - Seek shade. Slip on a shirt; slap on a hat
 - Apply sunscreen & lip balm with an SPF of 15 or higher
 - Wear sunglasses
 - Avoid other sources of UV light such as tanning beds & sun lamps



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co
THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE www.cancer.gov
THE MAYO CLINIC www.mayoclinic.com
THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY www.cancer.org