Cancer Prevention

Preventing cancer is complex. Many varying factors are involved. Although heredity plays a role in up to 15% of all cases, almost 2 out of 3 cancers are related to the personal choices we make. That means these can be prevented!

Approximately one third of all cancers are the result of cigarette smoking. Tobacco is one of the most potent carcinogens (agents that cause cancer). Additionally, many cancers are the result of excessive alcohol consumption. The person who both smokes and drinks greatly increases the risk of getting cancer. All cancers caused by smoking cigarettes and drinking too much alcohol can be completely prevented.

Another one third of all cancers are the result of lifestyle choices like poor nutrition, not enough exercise and being overweight. Lifestyle changes are within everyone’s reach.

Avoiding carcinogens can prevent cancer, too. These can be physical (cigarette smoke), chemical (vinyl chloride found in industry), viral (the human papillomaviruses of cervical cancer) or bacterial (the cancer B-cell lymphoma).

And new cancer-preventive methods are being used and tried:
• Drugs like tamoxifen (used in preventing breast cancer in women at high risk) and new drugs currently being tested for FDA approval.
• Preventive surgery such as colon polyp removal in persons at high risk for colon cancer.
• Herbs, supplements and treatments currently being studied.

Take time to learn more about cancer prevention. Then put what you’ve learned to use. Life is precious.

February Is Cancer Prevention Month

Prayer: Oh, God, life is precious. I want to make each day count. Guide me to make right choices, even when those choices are not easy. Amen.

Choose a Lifestyle That Reduces Cancer Risk

According to the American Cancer Society, the single most important dietary intervention to lower risk for cancer is this: Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Could anything be simpler, easier or more natural!

With a third of all cancer deaths being related to diet, exercise and excess weight, this suggestion to eat more plants becomes critically important.

Here are other recommendations that have proven to help reduce cancer cases and deaths in large groups of people:
✦ Avoid tobacco and second-hand smoke.
✦ Get your weight right.
✦ Be physically active. At least 5 days a week, adults should engage in moderate levels of activity for 30 minutes or more, and children should do moderate to vigorous activity for at least 60 minutes.
✦ Eat a healthy diet. Find plants you like; learn to love them.
✦ Limit your intake of alcohol. Men under 65 should drink no more than 2 drinks a day; women and anyone over 65 should drink a maximum of 1 drink a day.
✦ Avoid carcinogens like asbestos, benzene, vinyl chloride.
✦ Do use sunscreen. Don’t use tanning parlors.
✦ Get the HPV vaccine if it will benefit you.
✦ Test for common cancers and pre-cancers. Pap tests, colonoscopies and mammograms can also detect cancer at an early stage when it’s small and easier to treat.

• advocatehealth.com
• americancancersociety.org
• smokefree.gov
• aa.org (Alcoholics Anonymous)