

April Is National Minority Cancer Awareness Month



What Is National Minority Cancer Awareness Week?

The American Cancer Society (ACS) and National Cancer Institute (NCI) chose to highlight this week because of high cancer rates and deaths for some ethnic and minority groups living in the United States. The ACS and NCI are working to find and correct the reasons for this unequal cancer burden among the minority community. Raising awareness of the problem in these communities is one step that can save lives—especially if more people have access to screening exams.

What Are the Key Statistics about Cancer in Minorities?

- African Americans have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial and ethnic group in the US for most cancers.
- African American women are less likely to develop breast cancer, but are more likely to die from the disease if they develop it.
- African-American men have almost twice the rate of getting and dying from prostate cancer than white men.
- Hispanics have a higher rate of cancer linked with infection such as uterine cervix, liver, and stomach.

Why are Minorities at Risk for Cancer?

Minority populations tend to have lower incomes, less or no health insurance, and greater poverty than the general population. Therefore, they may put off the expense of seeing a doctor until they are very sick. Often times they may be diagnosed with cancer at a later stage, and thus have a poorer chance of survival. A lack of education, living in a rural or inner city area, unemployment, and trouble understanding English may also add to higher cancer rates for some communities. Recently, laws have been put into place to help prevent, diagnose, and treat cancer in minorities and people who cannot afford healthcare.

Can Cancer Be Found Early?

You can prevent some cancers by detecting abnormal cells before they become cancer cells. Often, abnormal cells can be discovered through a cancer screening. Types of cancer screenings include an exam by your healthcare team or a test that detects abnormal cells. A physical exam may help detect certain types of cancers at an early stage. On the next page are some examples of screening exams or tests:

Screening Exam or Test	Cancer Detected
Physical exam	Examples of cancers include skin, oral, lymphomas, breast, liver, colon, rectal, prostate, endometrial and ovarian
Mammography	Breast
PAP smear	Cervical
PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen)	Prostate
Colonoscopy or Sigmoidoscopy	Rectal and colon cancer
Stool for Occult Blood	Rectal and colon cancer

Can Cancer Be Prevented?

Researchers believe keeping a healthy lifestyle may prevent many cancers. A healthy lifestyle includes maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, managing stress, avoiding heavy or excess alcohol, and not smoking. Avoiding exposure to cancer causing agents such as certain chemicals, lead and asbestos, and sun exposure that results in sunburns can also help prevent cancer.

Diet and Health Guidelines for Cancer Prevention

1. Choose a diet rich in a variety of plant-based foods.
2. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits.
3. Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active.
4. Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
5. Select foods low in fat and salt.
6. Prepare and store food safely.
7. Do not use tobacco in any form.

Benefits of Regular Exercise

- ♥ Reduces risk of heart disease
- ♥ Increases good cholesterol
- ♥ Lowers blood pressure
- ♥ Reduces the risk of diabetes
- ♥ Helps maintain healthy weight
- ♥ Increases feeling of well-being
- ♥ Helps control appetite
- ♥ Reduces risk of colon, prostate & breast cancers
- ♥ Improves muscle tone and strength
- ♥ Improves balance
- ♥ Relieves insomnia
- ♥ Relieves anxiety and stress
- ♥ Prevents/treats depression
- ♥ Boosts self-image

Smoking

Studies show that tobacco products in any form (for example cigarettes and chewing tobacco) are a major cause of lung and head and neck cancer. Avoiding tobacco and quitting smoking are the two major steps that can be taken to prevent these cancers. The earlier you start using tobacco, the greater your risk for developing cancer and other health problems.

Protection from the Damaging Rays of the Sun

Limiting exposure to the damaging UV radiation of the sun is the best way to prevent skin cancer.

- Try and avoid the sun between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- Wear protective clothing—cover up with a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirts and pants to ensure the sun won't penetrate. Wear sunglasses.
- Use sunscreen. The American Cancer Society recommends that you use a sunscreen with a sun protective factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Apply the sunscreen to any part of the body that is not protected by clothing. It is important to remember that the sunscreen must be reapplied throughout the day in order to be effective.
- Beware of cloudy days. You can get burned just as easily on a cloudy day as a sunny day.
- Do not use sunlamps or tanning salons.

Cancer Prevention Trials at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

If you would like further information about clinical trials for preventing cancer, please call Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey at 732-235-8675. For additional information about nationwide cancer prevention trials, you can call the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4 CANCER or visit their Web site at www.cancer.gov.

Where Can I Find Further Information?

Resource and Learning Center

732-235-9639

www.cinj.org/rlc

Provides reliable, relevant and current information about all aspects of cancer.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

<http://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/index.html>

The American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345

www.cancer.org

American Institute for Cancer Research

1-800-843-8114

www.aicr.org

MedlinePlus

www.medlineplus.gov

National Cancer Institute

1-800-4-CANCER

www.cancer.gov

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

800-232-4636

<http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/index.htm>

National Institute of Health

301-496-4000

www.nih.gov

NJ Cancer Education and Early Detection Prevention and Health Promotion (NJCEED)

1-800-328-3838

<http://www.nj.gov/health/ces/public/resources/njceed.shtml>



RLC website QR code. Scan with smartphone / device.