

February Is Screening and Early Detection for Cancer Month

Cancer is the result of the uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells within the body. There are many different types of cancers. Reducing your risk factors can prevent some of these cancers. A risk factor is anything that increases a person’s chance of developing cancer. An example of a risk factor that can be controlled is smoking; choosing not to smoke will greatly reduce the risk of getting lung cancer. A risk factor that cannot be controlled is your genes. You can inherit genes from your parents that may make you more likely to get a cancer.

Cancer Screening

You can also prevent cancer by detecting abnormal cells that can become cancer cells. These 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. Below 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	Rectal and colon cancer
Stool for Occult Blood	Rectal and colon cancer

Once a year you should see your healthcare team and ask to have the suggested screening cancer tests. A good way to remember to see your healthcare team is plan your visit around your birthday every year.

Most tests are covered by medical insurance. If you do not have insurance then contact your local public health office for places you can go to for these services either at no cost or at a reduced cost.

The following gives guidelines about screening cancer tests you should have based on your age. Please note: your family medical history or your personal health issues can change these screening guidelines.

As of 5/30/18, the American Cancer Society has revised its cancer screening guidelines based on new research on July 7, 2017. Please see the American Cancer Society's Web site at www.cancer.org for later updates.

Cancer-related Checkup

Beginning at age 20, men and women should have periodic health exams, a cancer-related checkup which includes health counseling, and depending on a person's age and gender, might include exams for cancers of the thyroid, oral cavity, skin, lymph nodes, testes, and ovaries, as well as for some non-malignant (non-cancerous) diseases. Special tests for certain cancer sites are recommended by the American Cancer Society (ACS) as outlined below.

Breast Cancer

- Women ages 40 to 44 should have the opportunity to begin annual breast cancer screening with mammograms.
- Women age 45 to 54 should get mammograms every year.
- Women 55 and older should switch to mammograms every 2 years, or can continue yearly screening. Screening should continue as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live 10 more years or longer.
- Women should know how their breasts normally feel and report any breast change promptly to their health care providers.
- Some women at increased risk (for example, family history, genetic tendency, past breast cancer) should be screened with MRIs along with mammograms. (The number of women who fall into this category is very small.) Talk with your health care provider about your risk for breast cancer and the best screening plan for you.

Colon and Rectal Cancer

Beginning at age 45, both men and women should follow 1 of these 7 testing schedules:

- yearly guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT)*
- yearly fecal immunochemical test (FIT)*
- Multi-target stool DNA test every 3 years*
- flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years*
- colonoscopy every 10 years
- CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years*

* If the test is positive, a colonoscopy should be done.

If you are at high risk of colon cancer based on family history or other factors, you may need to be screened using a different schedule. Talk with your health care provider about your history and the testing plan that's best for you.

Cervical Cancer

- All women should begin cervical cancer screening at age 21. Women under age 21 should not be tested.
- Women between the ages of 21 and 29 should have a Pap test every 3 years. HPV testing should not be used unless it is needed after an abnormal Pap test result.
- Women between the ages of 30 and 65 should have a Pap test plus and HPV test every 5 years or have the Pap test alone every 3 years.
- Women over age 65 who have had regular cervical cancer testing in the past 10 years with normal results can stop being tested. Women with a history of cervical pre-cancer should continue to be tested for at least 20 years after that diagnosis, even if testing continues past age 65.
- Women who have had a total hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix) can stop having cervical cancer screening, unless the surgery was done as a treatment for cervical cancer or pre-cancer. Women who have had a hysterectomy without removal of the cervix should continue to follow the guidelines above.
- Women who have been vaccinated against HPV should still follow the above screening recommendations.

Some women, because of their health history (HIV infection, organ transplant, DES exposure, etc.), may need a different screening schedule for cervical cancer. Talk to your health care provider about your history.

Endometrial (Uterine) Cancer

The ACS recommends that at the time of menopause, all women should be informed about the risks and symptoms of endometrial cancer, and to report any unexpected bleeding or spotting to their doctors.

Some women, because of their history, may need to consider having a yearly endometrial biopsy. Please talk with your health care provider about your history.

Lung Cancer

The ACS does not recommend tests to screen for lung cancer in people who are at average risk of this disease. However, the ACS does have screening guidelines for individuals who are at higher risk of lung cancer. If you meet all of the following criteria then you might be a candidate for screening:

- 55 to 74 years of age
- In fairly good health
- Currently smoke or have quit smoking in the past 15 years
- Have at least a 30 pack-year smoking history

Prostate Cancer

The ACS recommends that men make an informed decision with their health care provider about whether to be tested for prostate cancer. Research has not yet proven that the potential benefits of testing outweigh the harms of testing and treatment. The ACS believes that men should not be tested without learning about what we know and don't know about the risks and possible benefits of testing and treatment.

Starting at age 50, talk to a health care provider about the pros and cons of testing to decide if testing is the right choice. If you are African American or have a father or brother who had prostate cancer before age 65, you should have this talk starting at age 45. If you decide to be tested, you should have the PSA blood test with or without a rectal exam. How often you are tested will depend on your PSA level.

Preventing Cancer

Researchers believe keeping a healthy life style could prevent many cancers. A healthy life-style 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.
- And always remember...*
Do not use tobacco in any form.

American Institute of Cancer Research, 2004 a Healthy Weight for Life

Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is an important part of preventing cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends the following as part of a healthy diet:

Eat a variety of healthful foods, with an emphasis on plant sources.

- Plant sources are grains, fruit vegetables, soy, and other non-meat foods.

Eat five or more servings of a variety of vegetables and fruits each day.

- Include vegetables and fruits at every meal and for snacks.
- Eat a variety of vegetables and fruits.
- Limit French fries, snack chips, and other fried vegetable products.
- Choose 100% juice if you drink fruit or vegetable juices.

Choose whole grains in preference to processed (refined) grains and sugars.

- Choose whole grain rice, bread, pasta, and cereals.
- Limit consumption of refined carbohydrates, including pastries, sweetened cereals, soft drinks, and sugars.

Limit consumption of red meats, especially those processed and high in fat.

- Choose fish, poultry, or beans as an alternative to beef, pork, and lamb.
- When you eat meat, select lean cuts and smaller portions.
- Prepare meat by baking, broiling, or poaching, rather than by frying or charbroiling.

Choose foods that help maintain a healthful weight.

- When you eat away from home, choose food low in fat, calories, and sugar and avoid large portions.
- Eat smaller portions of high-calorie foods. Be aware that “low fat” or “fat free” does not mean “low calorie” and those low-fat cakes, cookies, and similar foods are often high in calories.
- Substitute vegetables, fruits, and other low-calorie foods for calorie-dense foods such as French fries, cheeseburgers, pizza, ice cream, doughnuts, and other sweets.

Stay Physically Active

"If exercise could be packed into a pill, it would be the single most widely prescribed pill in the nation." --
Dr. Robert Burke

Benefits of Regular Exercise

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

Recommended Amount of Exercise

- Adults should engage in moderate-intensity physical activities for at least 30 minutes on five or more days of the week.
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/American College of Sports Medicine*

Examples of Healthy Exercise

- Walking
- Bicycle riding
- Stretching
- Jogging
- Hiking
- Gardening
- Housecleaning
- Dancing
- Racket sports
- Resistance exercises

Steps to Start Living a More Active Life

1. Obtain medical clearance from your doctor if you are:

- Male and 40 years old and older
- Female and 50 years and older

2. Build exercise into your day:

- Every little bit makes a difference
- Make exercise convenient
 - Take the stairs instead of the elevator
 - Walk short distances instead of driving
 - Park a little farther from store entrances and walk
- Make exercise fun
 - Do activities that you find enjoyable
 - Get an exercise partner
- Find indoor options when weather is too cold or hot
 - Mall walking
 - Aerobic exercise videos
 - Stationary bike
 - Treadmill
 - Dancing
- Remember to start off slowly and set realistic goals!

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 cancer. The earlier you start using tobacco, the greater your risk for developing cancer and other health problems.

Sun Facts

The sun is needed for its light and warmth, but the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation can cause damage to your skin and eyes. This damage leads to premature aging of the skin and is the greatest risk factor for developing skin cancer. The damaging effects of UV radiation are present even when it's cloudy or overcast.

Sun exposure that is intense enough to cause sunburn clearly increases a person's risk of developing skin cancer. Even UV exposure that does not cause sunburn can increase skin cancer risk.

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 4:00 p.m.
- Wear protective clothing--cover up with a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirts and pants to ensure the sun won't penetrate.
- Use sunscreen. The American Cancer Society recommends that you use a sunscreen with a sun protective factor (SPF) of 30 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.

Genetic Testing

Researchers have found changes (mutations) in genes may cause cancer. Some genetic changes may increase a person's chance of getting cancer. People who are concerned about cancer in their family should talk to their doctor. The doctor may send them to a cancer genetics specialist. People with a strong family history of cancer may be recommended to have a blood test. These tests may show if they have inherited any of these genetic changes. Genetic counseling helps people decide if testing is right for them as well as understand and deal with the results.

Genetic counseling is available through the Hereditary Oncology Prevention and Evaluation Program at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. Please call 732-235-7110 to schedule an appointment.

More Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Making healthy lifestyle choices will decrease the risk of developing cancer. **Viruses** such as the human papilloma virus (HPV) and Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV) may cause cancer. Sexual behaviors that increase your chances of contracting these viruses are:

- intercourse at an early age
- having many sexual partners
- having sex with uncircumcised males
- having unprotected sex

Alcohol is also linked to certain types of cancers. The National Cancer Institute provides the following information on alcohol consumption and the association between drinking alcohol and developing cancer.

- Drinking alcohol increases the risk of cancers of the mouth, esophagus, pharynx, larynx, liver and colorectal cancer in men and women, and breast cancer in women. In general, these risks increase with more than one drink daily for women and two drinks daily for men. (A drink is defined as 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.)
- The earlier that long-term, heavy alcohol use begins, the greater the cancer risk. Also, using alcohol with tobacco is riskier than using either one alone, because it further increases the chances of getting cancers of the mouth, throat, and esophagus.

Cancer Prevention Clinical Trials

If you would like information about clinical trials (available in New Jersey) 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?

The Resource and Learning Center

732-235-9639

www.cinj.org/rlc

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

National Cancer Institute

1-800-4-CANCER

www.cancer.gov

The American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345

www.cancer.org

American Institute for Cancer Research

1-800-843-8114

www.aicr.org

National Institute of Health

301-496-4000

www.nih.gov

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

<https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Name/home>

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

800-232-4636

www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/



RLC website QR code. Scan with your smartphone or device.