

Reducing the Risk of Cancer

Anyone can get cancer. One of the biggest factors that makes a person more likely to get cancer is age: 3 out of 4 cancers are found in people age 55 or older. But there are many other factors that affect cancer risk and some of them can be changed. It is only natural that people are looking for more ways to reduce the risk of cancer.

Can the risk of cancer be eliminated?

Is there a way to guarantee that you or your loved ones will not get cancer? So far, nothing has been found that is proven to eliminate the risk of every case of cancer. However, there are things you can do that might help reduce your personal chance of getting cancer.

If cancer does develop, there are also early detection tests that can improve the odds that cancer will be found at an early stage (when it is small and easier to treat). But, as of today, even the best methods to try and reduce your cancer risk (called *cancer risk reduction*) cannot prevent all cancers.

When you hear about something new to reduce the risk of cancer

In your quest to be healthy, you may hear about something that you are told can reduce your risk of cancer—a new way you have not heard about before. It might sound like a good idea, and you want to try it.

You may have questions, though, since you are thinking about spending your money, time and energy on something that may not be proven. At this point, you may not be sure if it will actually reduce your risk of cancer, or if it could even harm you. Before you put your body and your money on the line, there are ways to find out more.

FDA-approved drugs

The new method may be a medicine that your doctor recommends to you to reduce your cancer risk. It is pretty easy to find out more about FDA-approved drugs, since there are many trustworthy sources and careful scientific studies involved. We can help you find out more, and there are others who can help, too.

Methods being studied for FDA approval

Maybe the method you heard about has not been approved, but is “in the pipeline” to become a mainstream cancer risk reduction method in the future. It may be a pill, a treatment or something else. It is usually not too hard to find information about these kinds of treatments. If the treatment has ever been approved by the FDA for any medical use, you can usually find good information on risks and side effects. But it may be harder to find out about how well it works for cancer risk reduction.

Non-prescription herbs, supplements, diets and special treatments

Other methods you uncover may be herbs, vitamins, other dietary supplements, health tonics, “body cleansings” or special diets that are supposed to boost the immune system, among many other things. It used to be that there were almost no studies that looked at these methods, but doctors are now trying to study more of them in the same ways that they study other methods.

Lifestyle changes

You may hear about other things you can do that are expected to help reduce your cancer risk. For instance, quitting tobacco, increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat, getting more exercise, cutting back on alcohol and red meats and staying at a healthy weight are all methods that have been given more attention lately. Studies on some these methods are fairly easy to find.

Whatever method you are thinking about, take the time to see what you can learn about it from sources you trust.



Because Everyone's Journey IS Different

NOTE: This document is from the American Cancer Society and is taken from www.cancer.org