



7 ways to help prevent cancer.



More than one third of cancers in Australia are preventable. Lifestyle has a big impact on cancer risk and many cancers are caused by things we can avoid, such as smoking, unhealthy diets and too much of the sun's UV radiation.

While we can't prevent all cancers, the good news is, making changes to your lifestyle can help cut your cancer risk.

- 1 Check for unusual changes and have regular screening tests
- 2 Limit alcohol
- 3 Maintain a healthy weight
- 4 Eat a healthy diet
- 5 Be active
- 6 Be SunSmart
- 7 Stop smoking

1 Check for unusual changes and have regular screening tests

Finding cancer early usually means treatment has a better chance of success. So it's important to know what's normal for your body and to see your doctor if you notice anything unusual or have any concerns.

Screening is one of the best ways of finding cancer early. There are three screening programs that Australians are encouraged to take part in:

- Men and women aged 50 to 74 years are encouraged to do the free at-home **bowel** screening test every two years. This test is sent by the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. Call the program on 1800 627 701 for more information.
- Women aged 50 to 74 years are encouraged to have a mammogram for **breast cancer** every two years. Call BreastScreen on 13 20 50 or visit breastscreen.org.au to make an appointment.
- Women aged 25 to 74 should have a Cervical Screening Test every five years to help prevent **cervical cancer**. Speak to your doctor or nurse to make an appointment.

As not all cancers have a screening test, it is important to see your doctor if you notice any unusual changes.



Look out for

- lumps or sores that don't heal
- coughs or hoarseness that won't go away
- unexplained weight loss
- a new spot or existing spot that has changed in size, colour or shape
- changes in your toilet habits or blood in a bowel motion.

These signs don't always mean you have cancer, but it's important to have them checked out. People who have a family history of cancer should talk to their doctor about their risk.

Immunisation

The HPV vaccine helps prevent some HPV-related cancers. In Australia, boys and girls aged 12-13 years are offered the vaccine for free at school as part of the National Immunisation Program.

Girls who have the vaccine will still need regular cervical screening when they are older to further reduce their risk of cervical cancer.

Visit hpvvaccine.org.au for more information.

2 Limit alcohol

Drinking alcohol increases the risk of at least 7 types of cancer, including cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, breast and bowel.

Any amount of alcohol increases your risk of cancer, so the best thing to do to reduce your risk is to limit your intake of alcohol or avoid it altogether.



If you do drink alcohol, Australian guidelines recommend:

- no more than 10 standard drinks in a week to reduce the risk of cancer and other serious diseases, and
- no more than four standard drinks on any one day to reduce the risk of injury and accidents from alcohol.

One standard drink equals:

- 285ml of beer (one small glass of beer)
- 100ml of wine (one small glass of wine)
- 30ml of spirits (one measure of spirits)

Tips

- Limit alcohol to special occasions.
- Drink water rather than alcoholic drinks to quench your thirst.
- Choose low-alcohol drinks.
- Introduce alcohol-free days into your week e.g. Sunday to Thursday.



3 Maintain a healthy weight

Being above a healthy weight can increase the risk of 13 types of cancer, including cancers of the bowel, breast and oesophagus.

A waistline of more than 94cm for men and 80cm for women increases the risk of some cancers, while a waistline of more than 102cm for men and 88cm for women greatly increases your risk.

By eating healthy foods, moving more and preventing more weight gain you can reduce your risk of cancer and other chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Tips

- Reduce food and drinks high in fat, salt and sugar, such as cakes, chips, lollies, biscuits and fried foods.
- Limit or avoid sugary soft drinks, fruit juices and alcoholic drinks as they are all high in kilojoules.
- Go for reduced-fat milk and dairy products.
- Look for leaner cuts or types of meat, such as chicken, fish or lean red meat.
- Watch your portion sizes.
- Be active every day.

4 Eat a healthy diet

A healthy, balanced diet will give you more energy, help you maintain a healthy weight, and can also cut your cancer risk.

Fruit and vegetables are full of fibre and nutrients, which makes them an important part of our daily diet. As well as having five serves of vegetables and two of fruit each day, Cancer Council recommends eating wholegrain breads and cereals.

Eating red meat and, in particular, processed meat (such as bacon, ham and salami), increases the risk of bowel cancer. It is also important to limit foods and drinks that are high in fat and sugar.

Tips

- Aim to eat five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit each day. A serving size is about a handful.
- Limit red meat intake to three to four serves a week. One serve should roughly fit into the palm of your hand.
- Reduce or avoid processed meats.
- Visit livelighter.com.au for information, tools and resources to help you eat well, be active and avoid excess weight gain.



5 Be physically active

Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of bowel and breast cancers, and can also help you maintain a healthy weight.

Each week, try for:

- 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate intensity physical activity, such as a brisk walk, golf, mowing the lawn or swimming, or
- 1.25 to 2.5 hours of vigorous intensity physical activity, such as jogging, aerobics, fast cycling, soccer or netball.

Doing some physical activity is better than doing none.

If you currently aren't doing any physical activity, start by doing a little, then slowly build up to the recommended amount.



Tips

- Be active in as many ways as you can. See physical activity as an opportunity, not an inconvenience.
- Walk instead of driving to the shops and get outside in your work breaks.
- Walk or cycle to work and walk up stairs instead of taking the lift or escalator.
- Do something you enjoy or can do with a friend, like tennis, swimming or dancing.
- If you have a job that involves a lot of sitting, take regular activity breaks. Consider a standing or walking meeting.

6 Be SunSmart

Sun protection is recommended whenever the UV level reaches 3 or above. Download the free SunSmart app or visit sunsmart.com.au to check what times you need to use sun protection each day. Protect yourself in five ways:

- 1 Slip on clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- 2 Slap on SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before you go outdoors and re-apply every two hours.
- 3 Slap on a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face, head, neck and ears.
- 4 Seek shade.
- 5 Slide on sunglasses – that meet the Australian Standard for UV protection.

When UV levels are below 3 (typically throughout winter in Victoria) sun protection is not recommended, unless you are an outdoor worker, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow, or outside for extended periods.

Protecting yourself from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation will help reduce your risk of skin cancer.



Tips

- Get to know your skin and check it regularly for changes, including any areas that aren't normally exposed to the sun. If you notice anything unusual, including any change in shape, colour or size of a spot, or a new spot, visit your doctor.
- Discuss your risk of skin cancer with your doctor and, if needed, create a surveillance plan to ensure any changes are picked up early.
- Layer clothing with different fabrics and garments to increase protection from UV.
- Use sunscreen on any skin not covered by clothing. As a guide for adults, use one teaspoon for each arm and leg, one for the front of the torso, one for the back, and one for the face, neck and ears.
- When choosing a hat, look for a tight weave and broad brim that is 7.5cm (for adults).
- You can use different types of shade, including natural (e.g. trees), built (e.g. pergola) or portable (e.g. shade umbrellas).
- When picking out sunnies, check the level of UV protection they provide. The Australian Standard for eye protection (AS/NZS1067) has five categories of sun protection – choose category 2 or higher.

Visit [sunsmart.com.au](https://www.sunsmart.com.au) for more information about sun protection and skin cancer.

7 Stop smoking

It is never too late to quit smoking, and the sooner you quit, the more you cut your cancer risk.

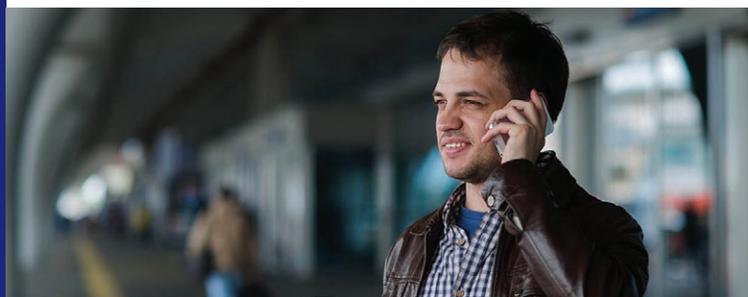
Smoking causes cancers of the lung, throat, mouth, tongue, nose, nasal sinus, voice box, oesophagus, pancreas, stomach, liver, kidney, bladder, ureter, bowel, ovary, cervix, and bone marrow (myeloid leukaemia).

It is also important to avoid second hand tobacco smoke. Even if you don't smoke, breathing in other people's cigarette smoke can increase your risk of cancer.

Trying to stop smoking can feel overwhelming. Lots of people try many times before they stop smoking for good. You may even feel like you've tried everything. Quitline get what you're going through and are here to help.

Tips

- **Talk to Quitline (13 7848).** Quitline counsellors, many of whom used to smoke, are qualified experts in helping people break free from smoking. They will find quit strategies that work for you. Research shows calling Quitline increases your chances of stopping smoking successfully.
- **Use stop smoking medication,** like the nicotine patch and gum, to help manage symptoms of nicotine withdrawal.
- **Speak with your GP.** Your GP can discuss your options and give you a script for cheaper stop smoking medication.





Cancer
Council



For cancer information
and support call **13 11 20**
or visit **cancervic.org.au**

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