

# What is Cancer?

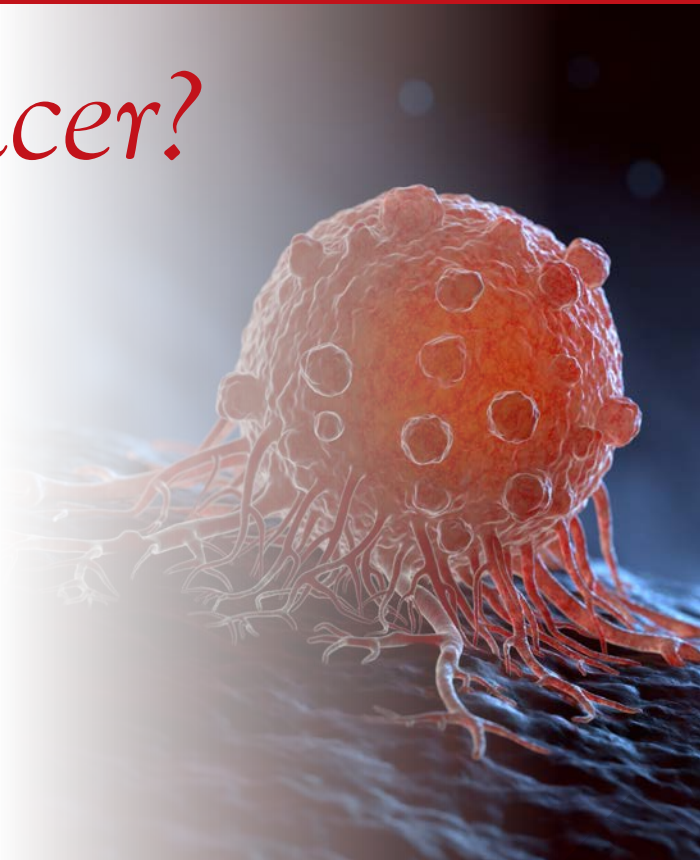
Cancer refers to diseases in which abnormal cells divide out of control and are able to invade other tissues. Cancer cells can spread to other parts of the body through the blood and lymph systems, which help the body get rid of toxins. There are more than 100 different types of cancer. Most cancers are named for the organ or type of cell in which they start.

## Early Detection Is Key

To be on the look out for early signs of cancer, remember to take CAUTION:

CAUTION

- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- A sore that does not heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- Obvious change in a wart or mole
- Nagging cough or hoarseness



Remember that not all cancers will produce these symptoms. If you have concerns, do not hesitate to talk to your medical professional.

## Cancer By The Numbers

- Up to 75% of American cancer deaths can be prevented.
- 9 out of 10 lung cancers deaths are caused by smoking cigarettes or secondhand smoke exposure.
- About 600,000 people in America die of cancer each year.
- About 5 to 10 percent of cancers are thought to be hereditary.

## RESOURCES

For more information please go to:

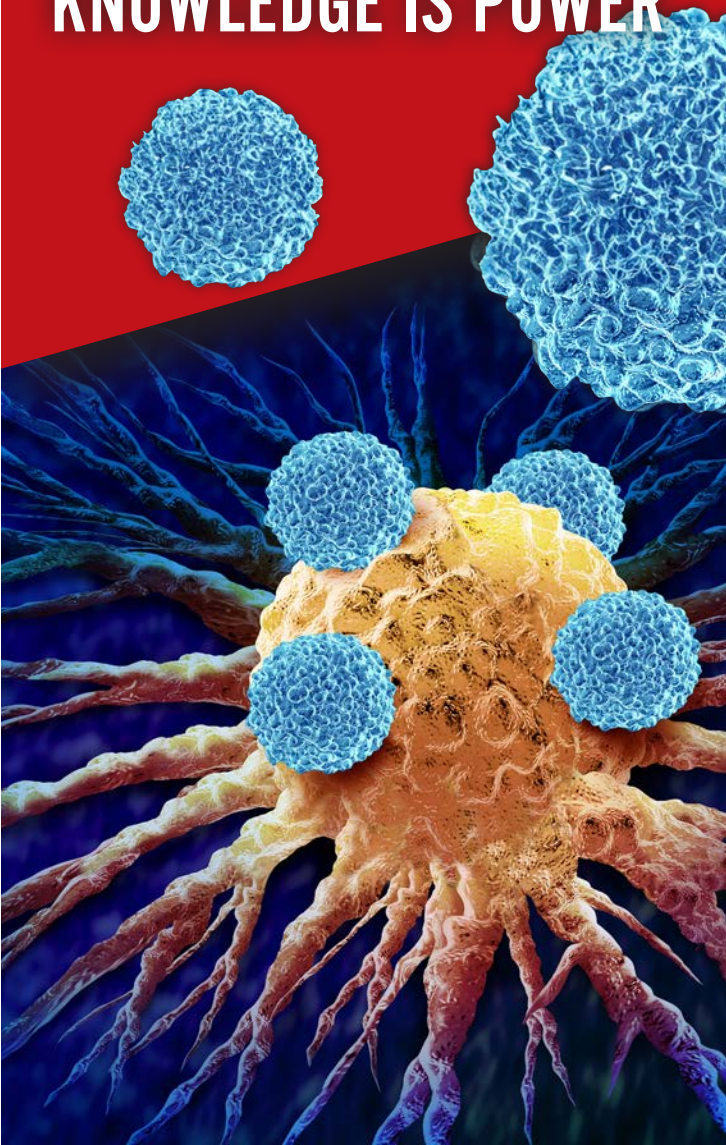
**American Cancer Society**

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**

[www.cdc.gov/cancer/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/index.htm)

# CANCER AWARENESS: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER



**HEALTHY  
DIRECTIONS**

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**HEALTHY  
DIRECTIONS**



## How To Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

There’s no sure way to prevent cancer, but you can help reduce your risk.

### Make Healthy Choices

Avoid tobacco, including exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Poisons in cigarette smoke are known to cause cancer and they can weaken the body’s immune system.

### Eat properly

- Limiting your consumption of saturated fat and red meat, while increasing your consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, can reduce your risk.

### Limit alcohol

- Drinking alcohol can increase your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, larynx (voice box), liver, and breast.
- If you drink, do so in moderate amounts: up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.
- It has been suggested that certain substances in red wine have anticancer properties. However, there is no evidence that drinking red wine reduces the risk of cancer.

### Physical Fitness

#### Exercise regularly

- Physical activity has been linked to improved immune systems and a reduced risk of certain cancers including: breast, colon, and lung. Exercise will help protect you even if you don’t lose weight.

#### Stay lean

- Obesity increases the risk of many forms of cancer. A lifestyle of healthy meals and physical activity can help you achieve your goals.

### Limit Sun Exposure

Skin cancer is one of the most common kinds of cancer and one of the most preventable.

#### Try these tips:

- Avoid midday sun when its rays are strongest.
- Stay in the shade as much as possible. Sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat help too.
- Cover your skin. Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Don’t skimp on sunscreen. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30.
- Don’t use tanning beds or sunlamps. These can do as much harm as sunlight.



### Get Vaccinated

Protecting against certain viral infections can help protect against cancer. Talk to a healthcare provider about getting vaccinated against:

- Hepatitis B, which can increase the risk of developing liver cancer.
- Human papillomavirus (HPV), which can lead to cervical cancer and other genital cancers.

### Get Regular Medical Care

Doing regular self-exams and having screenings for cancers — such as cancer of the skin, colon, cervix and breast — can raise the chances of finding cancer early. That’s when treatment is most likely to succeed. Ask a healthcare provider about the best cancer screening schedule for you.

### Know Your Family History

If you have a family history of breast, ovarian, uterine, or colorectal cancer, you may have a higher risk for developing these cancers. Talking to your doctor about this can help you decide what screening you need, when to start, and how often to be tested.

Knowing your family health history also helps determine if you should receive genetic counseling, which gives you information about how genetic conditions might affect you or your family.

### After Diagnosis

After a diagnosis, the big question is, “How do I live my best life now that I have cancer?” Key issues to consider include:

- What type of cancer treatment is right for you?
- What are the side effects of the treatment?
- Are there clinical trials of new therapies that you might be able to participate in?
- Are there complementary and alternative medicines?
- Many patients find that activities such as yoga and acupuncture help them.
- How can you stay healthy and prevent infections during treatment?
- How will you pay for treatment?

For all of your questions, be sure to talk to your healthcare professional.

