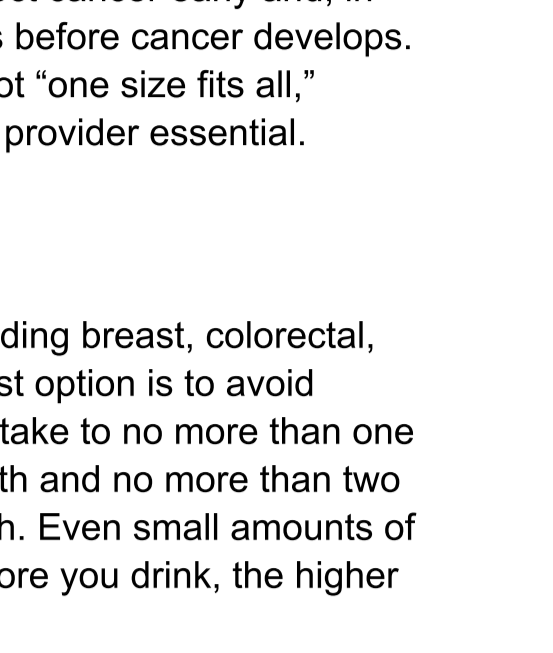


April is Cancer Control Month

Cancer Control Month, observed each April, is a national effort to raise awareness about how healthy habits, prevention, and early detection can reduce the risk of cancer. It also serves as a time to recognize the strength and challenges of those living with cancer, while reinforcing the importance of easing the physical, emotional, and financial burdens they face. Throughout the month, communities across the country come together to share information, spark conversations, and promote action—ensuring more people understand the power of prevention, the value of early detection, and the advances in cancer treatment.

Prevention is Powerful: Eight Everyday Ways to Lower Your Cancer Risk



Did you know that many of the choices you make every day can significantly reduce your risk of developing cancer? Research shows that up to **50% of cancer cases and deaths may be preventable** with the knowledge and tools we have today. While no single action can guarantee prevention, adopting healthy behaviors, and staying informed can dramatically improve outcomes.

Here are eight proven ways to reduce your cancer risk—or detect cancer early, when treatment is most effective.



1. Know Your Family History and Get Recommended Screenings

Understanding your family health history can help you and your health care provider determine which cancer screenings are right for you, and when to begin them. Screening tests can detect cancer early and, in some cases, identify precancerous conditions before cancer develops. While screening saves lives, guidelines are not “one size fits all,” making personalized conversations with your provider essential.



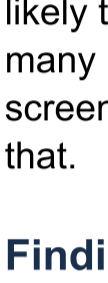
2. Avoid or Limit Alcohol

Alcohol use is linked to several cancers, including breast, colorectal, esophageal, oral, and liver cancers. The safest option is to avoid alcohol entirely. If you choose to drink, limit intake to no more than one drink per day for those assigned female at birth and no more than two drinks per day for those assigned male at birth. Even small amounts of alcohol may increase cancer risk—and the more you drink, the higher the risk.



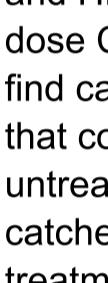
3. Don't Use Tobacco

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of cancer. Cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, hookah, and other products are linked to cancers of the lung, breast, colon, bladder, cervix, throat and more. Smoking still accounts for about **30% of all cancer deaths**, and **80–90% of lung cancers** are related to smoking. Secondhand smoke also poses serious risks. E-cigarettes are not a safe alternative and can lead to nicotine addiction and future tobacco use.



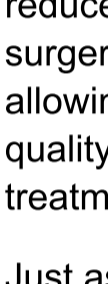
4. Protect Your Skin from the Sun

Skin cancer is the most common—and one of the most preventable—cancers in the United States. Most cases are caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or tanning beds. Use sunscreen, seek shade, wear protective clothing, and avoid indoor tanning year-round.



5. Eat a Plant-Forward Diet

A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains supports overall health and may lower cancer risk. Limit red meat, avoid processed meats, reduce salty foods, and skip sugary drinks. A large 2021 study found that eating **three servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit daily** was associated with a **10% lower risk of cancer-related death**.



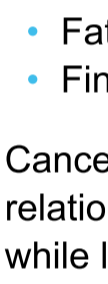
6. Maintain a Healthy Weight and Stay Active

Obesity is linked to several cancers, including breast (postmenopausal), colon, kidney, liver, and pancreatic cancers. Aim for at least **30 minutes of physical activity five days a week**. Regular movement helps manage weight, reduce stress, boost immunity, and lower the risk of multiple cancers. If you sit for long periods, make a habit of standing or walking every hour.



7. Practice Safer Sex and Avoid Risky Behaviors

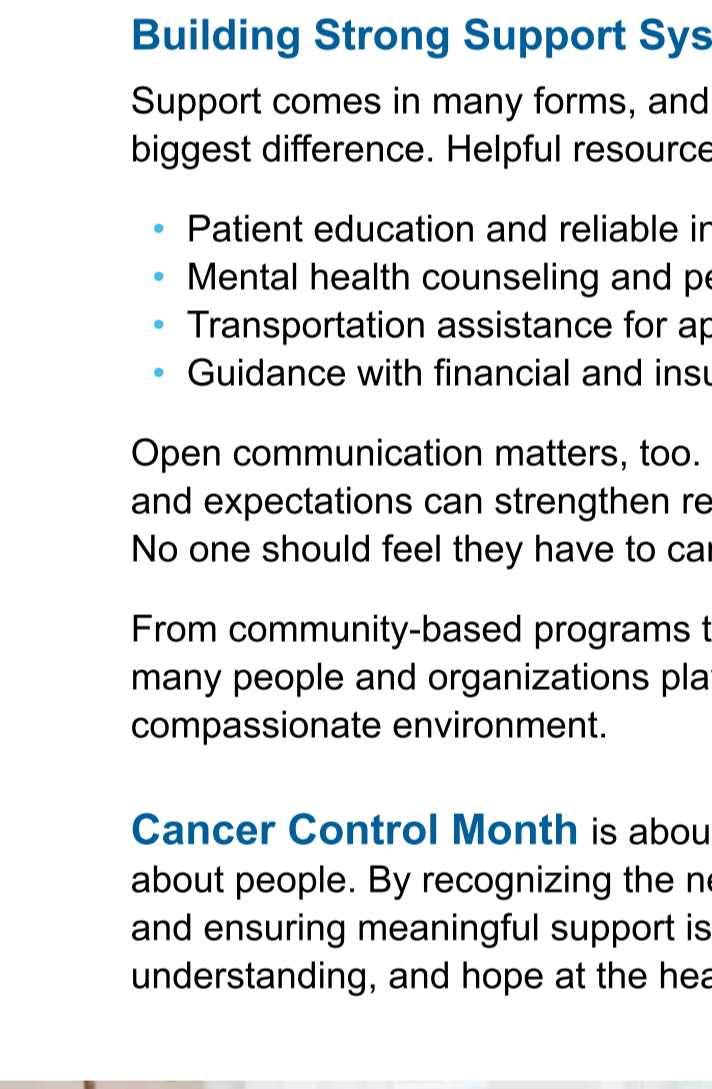
Certain infections, including human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B and C, can increase cancer risk. HPV is linked to cervical, throat, and other cancers, while hepatitis infections raise the risk of liver cancer. Practicing safer sex and avoiding behaviors such as sharing needles can significantly reduce exposure.



8. Get Vaccinated

Vaccines protect against cancer-causing viruses. The HPV vaccine is recommended for children ages 9 - 12, with catch-up vaccination available through age 26. The hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for all children and most adults. Testing and treatment are available for hepatitis B and C.

The bottom line: Prevention works. Small, consistent choices can add up to a meaningful reduction in cancer risk—and healthier years ahead.



Early Detection Saves Lives: Why Screening Still Matters

Cancer is a word no one wants to hear. Yet it remains one of the leading causes of death worldwide. The encouraging news is that outcomes for many cancers have improved dramatically over the past several decades—and one of the biggest reasons is early detection.

When cancer is found early, often before symptoms appear, treatment is more likely to work, usually less aggressive, and far more likely to save lives. Even so, many people delay or skip recommended screenings. Understanding why screening still matters—and why it's worth making a priority—can help change that.

Finding Cancer Before It Finds You

At its core, cancer screening is about looking for disease before it causes harm. Many common cancers develop slowly and silently, without pain or obvious warning signs. By the time symptoms such as unexplained weight loss, fatigue, or pain appear, the disease may already be advanced.

Screening tests—such as mammograms, colonoscopies, Pap and HPV tests, PSA tests, and low-dose CT scans—are designed to find cancer early or identify changes that could become cancer if left untreated. In many cases, screening catches disease at a point when treatment is simpler and outcomes are far better.

Why Early Detection Changes Everything

Cancers discovered early tend to be smaller, localized, and easier to treat. That difference can be life changing. Survival rates are significantly higher when cancer is caught at an early stage, and treatment often requires fewer interventions. Early detection may reduce the need for extensive surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation, allowing people to maintain a better quality of life during and after treatment.

Just as important, early detection often gives patients more choices – more time to consider options and more control over their care.

Screening Can Prevent Cancer Altogether

Some screening tests go a step further by preventing cancer before it begins. Colonoscopies can identify and remove precancerous polyps, and Pap tests can detect abnormal cervical cells that can be treated early. In these cases, screening doesn't just save lives – it stops cancer in its tracks.

Why People Put Screening Off

If screening is so effective, why do many people avoid it? The reasons are human and understandable. Fear of results, discomfort, cost, lack of time, or the belief that “I feel fine, so I must be fine” all play a role. But the reality is that most screening tests are quick, safe, and far less burdensome than cancer treatment later on.

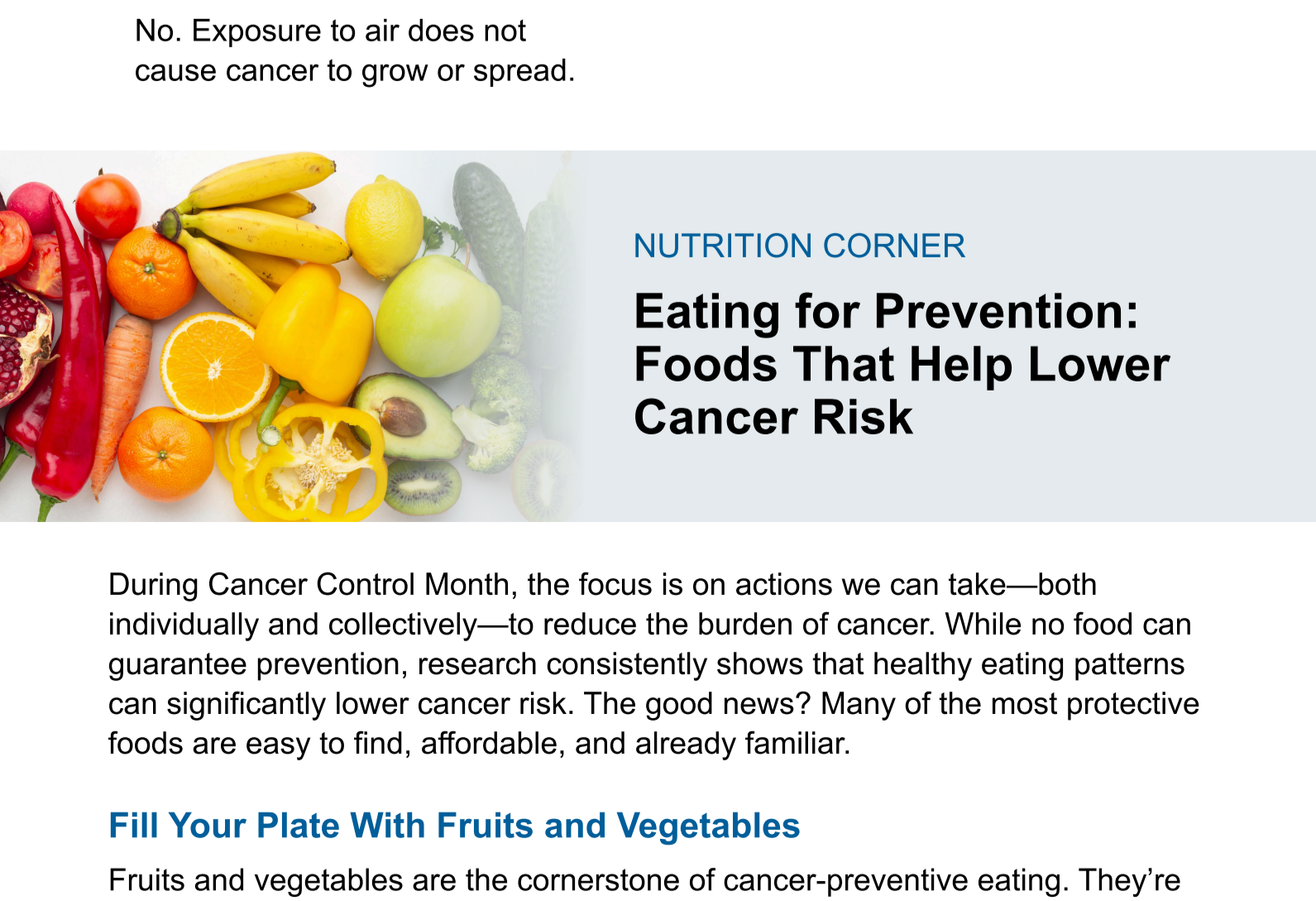
A Personal Approach Matters

Cancer screening is not one-size-fits-all. Age, family history, genetics, lifestyle, and overall health all influence which screenings are appropriate and when. That's why a conversation with a health care provider is so important. Together, you can create a screening plan tailored to your personal risk—not based on assumptions.

A Simple, Powerful Next Step

If you're unsure whether you're up to date on cancer screenings, take a moment to ask. Schedule a visit with your health care provider. Start the conversation. Encourage a family member or friend to do the same.

Early detection saves lives—but only when screening happens. Taking that step today is one of the most powerful investments you can make in your future health.



Patient, Survivor, and Caregiver Support in Cancer Care

No One Should Face Cancer Alone

A cancer diagnosis can turn life upside down—not only for the person receiving the news, but also for the loved ones who walk beside them. During Cancer Control Month, we recognize the strength of cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers, and acknowledge the challenges they face—many of which are not always visible to others.

The Hidden Challenges of Cancer

Living with cancer, or recovering from treatment, involves far more than doctor visits and treatment plans. Many people experience challenges that affect daily life long after treatment ends, including:

- Emotional stress, anxiety, and fear of recurrence
- Fatigue, sleep problems, and lingering physical side effects
- Financial strain related to medical bills and insurance complexities

Cancer can also disrupt family routines, work responsibilities, and personal relationships. Patients may struggle with changes in independence or identity, while loved ones adjust to new roles and responsibilities.

Caregivers Need Support, Too

Caregivers—often spouses, partners, children, relatives, or close friends—play an essential role in cancer care. They may help with:

- Managing appointments and medications
- Handling household tasks
- Providing emotional support and encouragement

While caregivers are vital to the care team, they often put their own health and well-being last. Emotional exhaustion, stress, and burnout are common, especially when support systems are limited. Recognizing and supporting caregivers is a critical part of comprehensive cancer care.

Life After Treatment: Survivorship Matters

For many, completing treatment brings relief and hope—but survivorship can introduce new challenges. Survivors may continue to face:

- Ongoing physical side effects
- Emotional ups and downs
- Anxiety about recurrence or the future

Adjusting to a “new normal” takes time, and feelings of isolation are not uncommon. Survivorship support can include follow-up care, mental health resources, wellness programs, and opportunities to connect with others who share similar experiences. These supports help survivors rebuild confidence and focus on long-term health and quality of life.

Building Strong Support Systems

Support comes in many forms, and often it's the small things that make the biggest difference. Helpful resources may include:

- Patient education and reliable information
- Mental health counseling and peer support groups
- Transportation assistance for appointments
- Guidance with financial and insurance concerns

Open communication matters, too. Honest conversations about fears, needs, and expectations can strengthen relationships and reduce feelings of isolation. No one should feel they have to carry everything on their own.

From community-based programs to healthcare providers and advocacy groups, many people and organizations play a role in creating a more supportive and compassionate environment.

Cancer Control Month is about more than prevention and treatment—it's about people. By recognizing the needs of patients, survivors, and caregivers, and ensuring meaningful support is within reach, we help keep compassion, understanding, and hope at the heart of cancer care.



Cancer Care Beyond Treatment: The Importance of Caregivers

During Cancer Control Month, much attention is rightly given to prevention, screening, research, and survivorship. Equally deserving of recognition, however, are the caregivers—the family members, friends, and loved ones who stand beside cancer patients every step of the way. Their work is often unpaid, unrecognized, and exhausting, yet it is essential to the well-being of those facing a cancer diagnosis.

A Role That Evolves Over Time

If you are caring for a person with cancer, you are a vital part of the patient's care team. Caregiving rarely follows a straight line. At the time of diagnosis, your role may center on emotional support—listening, reassuring, and helping your loved one process overwhelming news. As treatment begins, responsibilities often expand. Caregivers may help manage medications, accompany patients to medical appointments, coordinate communication with health care providers, and keep track of test results and schedules.

Supporting Daily Life and Treatment

Over time, caregiving can become even more hands-on. Many caregivers assist with household chores, meal preparation, transportation, personal hygiene, and mobility. Others take on administrative responsibilities such as paying bills, handling insurance paperwork, or navigating leave from work. These tasks may seem ordinary, but together they form the foundation that allows patients to focus their energy on treatment and healing.

The Emotional Weight Caregivers Carry

The emotional toll of caregiving should not be underestimated. Watching someone you love cope with pain, uncertainty, or side effects can be heartbreaking. Caregivers often experience anxiety, fatigue, and feelings of helplessness, yet may hesitate to express their own struggles for fear of burdening others. This quiet strength, while admirable, can come at a cost.

Caring for the Caregiver

That is why self-care is not a luxury for caregivers—it is a necessity. Caring for someone with cancer can be physically and emotionally demanding, and burnout is common. Caregivers should be encouraged to ask for help, whether from other family members, friends, support groups, or professional services. Taking breaks, maintaining healthy routines, and seeking emotional support can help sustain both caregiver and patient over the long term.

Recognizing Caregivers During Cancer Control Month

Cancer Control Month is an opportunity not only to spotlight the disease, but also to honor those who walk alongside patients through diagnosis, treatment, and beyond. By recognizing caregivers, supporting their needs, and reminding them that their health matters too, we strengthen the entire cancer care community. Their compassion, resilience, and dedication truly make a difference – every single day.

Common Cancer Myths and Misperceptions

1. Is cancer a death sentence?

No. Cancer survival rates have improved steadily, and many cancers now have five-year survival rates of 90% or higher, though outcomes vary based on many individual factors.

2. Will eating sugar make my cancer worse?

No. While cancer cells use more glucose, eating sugar has not been shown to make cancer grow or spread, though high-sugar diets can contribute to obesity, which raises cancer risk.

3. Is cancer contagious?

No. Cancer does not spread from person to person, except in extremely rare cases involving organ or tissue transplantation.

4. Can cancer surgery or a tumor biopsy cause cancer to spread?

Very rarely. Surgeons follow strict procedures to prevent cancer cells from spreading during biopsies or surgery.

5. Does my attitude – positive or negative – determine whether I get cancer or survive it?

No. There is no scientific evidence that attitude affects cancer risk or survival, though emotional support can help with coping and quality of life.

6. Will cancer get worse if it is exposed to air?

No. Exposure to air does not cause cancer to grow or spread.

7. Do cell phones cause cancer?

No. The best available studies show no evidence that cell phone use causes cancer.

8. Do power lines cause cancer?

No. The low-frequency energy from power lines does not damage genes and has not been shown to cause cancer.

9. Are there herbal products that can cure cancer?

No. No herbal products have been proven to treat or cure cancer, and some may interfere with standard treatments.

10. If someone in my family has cancer, am I likely to get cancer too?

Not necessarily. Only about 5 - 10% of cancers are inherited, while most result from genetic changes over a person's lifetime.

11. If no one in my family has had cancer, am I risk-free?

No. Most cancers are not inherited, and about 39% of people will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives.

12. Do antiperspirants or deodorants cause breast cancer?

No. Research has found no evidence linking antiperspirants or deodorants to breast cancer.



NUTRITION CORNER

Eating for Prevention: Foods That Help Lower Cancer Risk

During Cancer Control Month, the focus is on actions we can take—both individually and collectively—to reduce the burden of cancer. While no food can guarantee prevention, research consistently shows that healthy eating patterns can significantly lower cancer risk. The good news? Many of the most protective foods are easy to find, affordable, and already familiar.

Fill Your Plate With Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are the cornerstone of cancer-preventive eating. They're rich in antioxidants, fiber, vitamins, and plant compounds that help protect cells from damage. Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage contain natural chemicals that support the body's ability to neutralize harmful substances. Leafy greens such as spinach and kale provide folate, which plays a role in healthy cell growth. Brightly colored fruits—berries, oranges, tomatoes—offer antioxidants linked to lower risks of several cancers.

Choose Whole Grains and Fiber-Rich Foods

Fiber matters more than many people realize. Diets high in fiber are associated with a lower risk of colorectal cancer, one of the most common cancers in the United States. Whole grains like oats, brown rice, quinoa, and whole-wheat bread help keep digestion running smoothly and may reduce inflammation. Beans, lentils, and peas are also fiber powerhouses—and they add protein without the saturated fat found in some animal products.

Opt for Healthy Fats

Healthy fats support overall wellness and may help reduce chronic inflammation, a known contributor to cancer development. Olive oil, nuts, seeds, and avocados are great everyday choices. Fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, and mackerel provide omega-3 fatty acids, which have been studied for their potential protective effects against certain cancers.

What to Limit?

Evidence shows that frequent consumption of processed meats—like bacon, hot dogs, and deli meats—increases the risk of colorectal cancer. Reducing processed foods and choosing whole, minimally processed options more often can help tip the balance toward prevention.

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