

Protect Yourself Inside and Out

According to the World Health Organization, 30 to 50 percent of cancers may be preventable. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is more important than ever. Texas Oncology suggests five simple steps to improve overall health and fight against cancer – inside and out:

- 1. Practice nutrition that lowers the risk of disease.** Managing your weight and eating a balanced diet may bolster your body's defenses against cancer and other illnesses. It's important to reduce calories, limit the intake of sugars, saturated fats, trans fats, and alcohol, and to eat nutritious foods like fresh produce.

The following nutritional guidelines are recommended:

- Substitute whole grains for refined or processed grains.
 - Limit processed and red meats, and foods high in salt and fat.
 - Have no more than one alcoholic drink daily for women and two for men.
 - Eat at least 2 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables daily.
 - Select dark, leafy greens and a variety of seasonal fruits and cruciferous vegetables
 - Drink plenty of water.
- 2. Get regular cancer screenings.** Resolve to get regular check-ups and health screenings. Ask your doctor when you should have important cancer screenings, and then schedule them. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that most Americans aren't getting their recommended screening tests for breast and cervical cancers, although screening rates for colon cancer have improved. Screenings can detect cancers at their earliest and most treatable stages. Also, conduct regular self-exams and check your skin for changes in moles, freckles, and other marks each month.
 - 3. Engage in physical activity.** Whether you prefer hiking, biking, playing outside with the kids, or an indoor option, it's easy to stay active year round. Many types of cancer, including colon, postmenopausal breast, endometrial, kidney, pancreatic, and esophageal cancers are associated with obesity and lack of physical activity.
 - 4. Practice sun safety.** Avoid improper exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer, but it is preventable by taking protective measures, such as using sunscreen and covering up the skin. Parents should remember that children also need protection from the sun.
 - 5. Don't smoke.** For the 15.7 percent of Texans who smoke, quitting should always be on the list. Eighty percent of lung cancer mortalities are smoking related, and about half of lifetime smokers will die from tobacco-related disease. Research consistently shows that smoking cessation is paramount to lung health. Smokers who quit are more likely to live healthier, longer lives, while decreasing lung cancer risk.

To jump start a healthy lifestyle, find more healthy lifestyle fact sheets at TexasOncology.com:

Healthy Lifestyle Resources:

- [Nutrition that Lowers the Risk of Disease](#)
- [Being Cancer Free at Any Age](#) (Screening Guidelines)
- [An Active, Healthier Lifestyle](#)
- [Sun Safety](#)
- [Skin Cancer Myths and Facts](#)
- [Smoking Cessation](#)

The American Cancer Society (cancer.org) offers several interactive online tools to help you stay healthy:

Healthy Lifestyle Tools:

- [Body Mass Index Calculator](#)
- [Calorie Counter](#)
- [Exercise Activity Calculator](#)
- [Sun Safety Quiz](#)

Sources: American Cancer Society, American Institute for Cancer Research, American Society of Clinical Oncology, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Cancer Institute, and World Health Organization



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