



Cut your cancer risk

A photograph of a man and a woman riding bicycles outdoors. The man is on the left, wearing a dark blue jacket and a black helmet, smiling. The woman is on the right, wearing a green jacket, red pants, and a white helmet, also smiling. The background is a blurred green forest.

**7 ways
to help
prevent
cancer**



Cancer Council 13 11 20
www.cutyourcancerrisk.org.au

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 physically active



6] Be SunSmart



7] Quit smoking

More than one third of cancers in Australia are preventable. Lifestyle has a big impact on cancer risk and many cancers are caused by avoidable factors including smoking, obesity and overexposure to the sun's UV radiation.

The good news is, making changes to your lifestyle can help cut your cancer risk. Visit cutyourcancerrisk.org.au to find out how.



Check for unusual changes and have regular screening tests

For most cancer types, finding it early means treatment has a better chance of success. It is important to know what's normal for you and to see your doctor if you notice anything unusual or have any concerns.

Screening is an effective way of finding cancer early and is recommended where there is a proven benefit:

- Men and women over 50 are encouraged to do a faecal occult blood test (FOBT) every two years to check for signs of **bowel cancer**.
- Women aged 50 to 74 years are encouraged to have a mammogram for **breast cancer** every two years.
- Women are encouraged to have regular cervical screening to detect early changes that if left undetected and untreated can lead to **cervical cancer**.

We encourage men who are concerned about prostate cancer to speak to their doctor about the benefits and limitations of the tests available.

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 mole or skin spot or one that changes shape, size or colour
- changes in your toilet habits or blood in a bowel motion.

These signs don't necessarily 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 genital HPV-related cancers. In Australia, boys and girls aged 12-13 years are offered the vaccine for free as part of the National HPV Vaccination Program. Girls who have the vaccine will still need regular cervical screening when they're older to reduce their risk of cervical cancer. Visit hpvvaccine.org.au for more information.



Limit alcohol

Even moderate amounts of alcohol increase the risk of cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, breast and bowel. Alcohol consumption is linked to more than 5,000 cancer cases in Australia each year.

To reduce your risk of cancer, limit your intake of alcohol or better still, avoid it altogether. If you choose to drink alcohol, Cancer Council recommends no more than two standard drinks per day.

One standard drink equals:

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

There is no evidence to suggest that alcohol reduces your overall risk of cancer.

TIPS

- Limit alcohol to special occasions.
- Drink water rather than alcoholic drinks to quench your thirst.
- Choose low-alcohol drinks.
- Have at least one or two alcohol-free days every week.





Eat a healthy diet



A healthy, balanced diet will not only give you more energy and help you maintain a healthy weight; it can also cut your cancer risk.

Fruit and vegetables are low in fat and calories and full of nutrients, making them an important part of our daily diet.

As well as having five serves of vegies and two of fruit each day, Cancer Council recommends eating wholegrain breads and cereals.

A balanced diet is important – research suggests that eating lots of red meat and, in particular, processed meat, increases the risk of bowel cancer. It is also important to limit foods and drinks that are high in fat and sugar.



Maintain a healthy weight

Cancer Council research shows that a waistline of more than 94cm for men and 80cm for women increases the risk of some types of cancer, including cancers of the bowel, breast and oesophagus, while a waistline of more than 102cm for men and 88cm for women greatly increases your risk.

Maintaining a healthy weight is about getting the balance right between what you eat and how physically active you are.

TIPS

- Reduce food and drinks high in fat and sugar.
- Limit or avoid sugar-sweetened soft drinks, fruit juices and alcoholic drinks as they are all high in calories.
- For adults, choose non-fat or reduced-fat milk and dairy products.
- Increase the amount of vegetables you have and go for leaner cuts or types of meat.
- To lose weight, try reducing the amount of food you put on your plate.

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.
- Limit or avoid eating processed meats like sausages, frankfurts, salami, bacon and ham.
- Use the LiveLighter Meal and Activity Planner to help you improve your diet. Go to livelighter.com.au/planner



Be physically active

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

One hour of moderate activity or 30 minutes of vigorous activity is recommended on most days for general health and fitness.

Moderate activities include brisk walking, medium-paced swimming or cycling. Vigorous activities include sports like football, squash, netball and basketball as well as activities such as aerobics, circuit training, jogging and fast cycling.

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 lunch 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 sedentary job, take regular activity breaks. Consider a standing or walking meeting.



Be SunSmart

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

Sun protection is recommended whenever **UV levels reach 3 or higher**. Check the daily sun protection times on the free SunSmart app or online at [sunsmart.com.au](https://www.sunsmart.com.au) to find out when UV levels will be 3 or higher, and protect yourself in five ways:

- 1 **Slip on clothing that covers as much skin as possible.**
- 2 **Slop 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 protects your face, head, neck and ears.**
- 4 **Seek shade.**
- 5 **Slide on sunglasses – make sure they meet the Australian standard.**

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.



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.
- Regular self-checking is also important if you have naturally dark skin. Although your risk of skin cancer is lower, it is more likely to be detected at a later, more dangerous stage than for people with lighter skin.
- Some people are at high risk of low vitamin D, for example if you have naturally very dark skin, little or no sun exposure and for some breastfed babies. Spending time unprotected in the sun during sun protection times is not recommended. Talk to your doctor to determine if vitamin D supplementation is appropriate for you.

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



Quit smoking



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

About one in eight new cases of cancer are due to smoking.

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

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. The good news is that by law, all Victorian bars and clubs are smoke-free, as well as the indoor areas of restaurants and workplaces.

TIPS

- Call the Quitline on 13 7848 and ask to speak to a Quit Specialist. A Quit Specialist can help you with practical and expert advice, or you can ask for a free Quit pack.
- Visit quit.org.au for information on quitting that you can read, interact with and download. You can also use QuitCoach, our internet quitting support service, and QuitTxt, our SMS service.
- People who have the best chance of quitting are those who use an advice and support service and quitting medications.
- Practice saying 'thanks, but I don't smoke' in case you're offered a cigarette.
- Think of yourself as a non-smoker.



March 2017