

Cut your cancer risk



1. Check for unusual changes and have regular screening tests

For most cancers, finding it early means treatment has a better chance of success.

Look out for:

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

Chances are you won't have cancer but it's important to get checked out.

Screening can find cancer early:

- Men and women over 50 are encouraged to do a test for **bowel cancer** every two years. Speak to your doctor or visit www.cancervic.org.au/bowel.
- Women aged 50–74 years are encouraged to have a mammogram for **breast cancer** every two years (call BreastScreen on 13 20 50 to book an appointment).
- Women are encouraged to have regular cervical screening to detect early changes, that if left undetected and untreated can lead to cervical cancer.

Men who are concerned about prostate cancer should speak to their doctor to help them decide whether testing is right for them.

Immunisation: The HPV vaccine helps prevent some genital HPV-related cancers. Boys and girls aged 12–13 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 www.hpvvaccine.org.au for more information.

2. Maintain a healthy weight

A waistline over 94 cm for men and 80 cm for women increases the risk of some types of cancer, including bowel, breast and oesophagus cancers, while a waistline of more than 102 cm for men and 88 cm for women *greatly* increases your risk.

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




Tips:

- Reduce food and drinks high in fat and sugar.
- Limit alcoholic drinks as they are high in kilojoules.
- Choose non-fat or reduced fat milk and dairy products.
- Choose fish, poultry or vegetarian options instead of red meat for some meals.
- If your weight is increasing you may need to reduce the amount of food you put on your plate.

3. Limit alcohol

Even moderate amounts of alcohol increase the risk of cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, stomach, liver, breast and bowel. To reduce the risk of cancer, limit your intake of alcohol or, better still, avoid it altogether. People who choose to drink alcohol should drink within the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol* – that is, no more than 2 standard drinks a day.

One standard drink is roughly equal to:

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

There is no evidence to suggest that alcoholic drinks (such as red wine) protect against any type of cancer.

Tips:

- If you do choose to drink alcoholic drinks, limit to special occasions.
- Drink water rather than alcohol when thirsty.
- Choose low-alcohol drinks.
- Have at least 1 or 2 alcohol-free days each week.

4. Eat a healthy diet

Fruit and vegetables are low in fat and kilojoules and help maintain a healthy body weight.

They may also protect against cancer of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, stomach, bowel and lung.

Eating red meat and, in particular, processed meat, may increase the risk of bowel cancer. Eat wholegrain breads and cereals as part of a healthy diet and to maintain a healthy body weight.

Tips:

- Aim to eat five serves of vegetables and two serves of fruit each day. A serve size is about a handful.
- Limit red meat intake to three or 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.

5. Be physically active

Regular activity reduces the risk of bowel and breast cancers.

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 activity includes active sports like football, tennis and basketball and activities such as aerobics, dancing, jogging and fast cycling.

Tips:

- Be active in as many ways as you can. See activity as an opportunity.
- 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 sit down a lot at work, take regular breaks to move around as much as possible throughout the day. Consider a standing or walking meeting.

6. Be SunSmart

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the main cause of skin cancer. UV damage also causes sunburn, tanning, premature ageing and eye damage.

The good news is sun protection will reduce your risk of skin cancer at any age.

We can't see or feel UV radiation, and UV levels can be high on cool, cloudy days, as well as scorching hot days. So don't rely on the weather as your guide to sun protection.

Check the free SunSmart app each day to find out when sun protection is recommended for your location.

During the daily sun protection times, use all five SunSmart steps:

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, neck and ears.

4 Seek shade.

5 Slide on sunglasses.

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. People who may be at risk of vitamin D deficiency should talk to their doctor for advice.

Visit sunsmart.com.au for more information about sun protection, skin cancer and vitamin D.

7. Quit smoking

About one in eight deaths from cancer are due to smoking. More than 15,000 Australians are diagnosed with a smoking-related cancer every year.

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

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.

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.
- Visit www.quit.org.au for advice and information on quitting. You can also use QuitCoach or QuitTxt. QuitCoach is a web-based computer program that can advise you based on your situation. QuitTxt provides regular SMS messages including tips and encouragement.
- Think of yourself as a non-smoker.

For more information about making changes to your lifestyle to help cut your cancer risk, visit www.cutyourcancerrisk.org.au and take our quiz.

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