

7 Ways

Adapted with permission from the
Harvard Center for Cancer Prevention
at the Harvard School of Public Health.

To Prevent Cancer

50%

OF ALL CANCERS CAN BE PREVENTED by things you can do. Take control of your health, and improve the health of your family, by following these seven recommendations. Doing so will help you and your family lower risk not only for cancer but also heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

1

Maintain a healthy weight.

Maintaining a healthy weight lowers the risk of cancers of the breast (post-menopausal), colon, kidney, esophagus and endometrium (lining of the uterus).

Tips for maintaining a healthy weight:

- Be physically active.
- Balance the amount of food you eat with the amount of energy you use.

Tips for parents and grandparents:

- Limit the amount of time your kids sit around the house.
- Encourage healthy snacking on fruits and vegetables.

2

Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day.

Being physically active lowers the risk of colon cancer and may lower the risk of breast cancer.

Tips for being physically active:

- A lot of things count as physical activity, maybe even your job if you are active at work. Try walking, jogging or dancing — whatever you enjoy!
- Any amount of physical activity is better than none. In general, the more you do, the better.

Tips for parents and grandparents:

- Do physically active things with your kids on a regular basis, beginning when they are very young.
- Encourage kids to play outside (when safe) and participate in organized sports or other physical activities like dancing or aerobics.

3

Don't smoke.

Tobacco use (including cigarettes, pipes, cigars and chewing tobacco) is linked to cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, lung, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, kidney, bladder, cervix and one type of leukemia.

Tips for quitting smoking:

- Keep trying! Quitting is tough, but not impossible. Over 1,000 Americans quit for good every day.
- Talk to a health care professional for help.
- Talk to the human resources office where you work. Your employer may offer quit-smoking programs for employees.
- Call New Mexico's free tobacco helpline at **1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669)**.

Tips for parents and grandparents:

- Try to quit as soon as possible. If you smoke, your kids will also be more likely to smoke.
- Don't smoke in the house or car. If kids breathe in your smoke, they may have a higher risk of breathing problems and lung cancer.
- When appropriate, talk to your kids about the dangers of smoking and chewing tobacco. A health care professional or school counselor can help.

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4

Eat a healthy diet.

A healthy diet lowers the risk of cancers of the prostate, breast, lung, colon, rectum, stomach and pancreas.

Tips for eating a healthy diet:

- Make fruits and vegetables part of every meal. Put fruit on your cereal. Eat vegetables as a snack.
- Choose chicken, fish or beans instead of red meat. The less red meat, the better.
- Choose foods like pasta, brown rice and whole wheat bread.

Tips for parents and grandparents:

- Have a bowl of fruit out all the time for kids to take snacks from.
- When eating at fast food restaurants, encourage kids to choose broiled chicken sandwiches rather than burgers.
- Make sandwiches using whole wheat bread.

5

Drink less than one alcoholic drink a day.

One drink is a glass of wine, a bottle of beer or a shot of hard liquor. Limiting alcohol lowers the risk of cancers of the breast, colon, rectum, mouth, throat and esophagus.

Tips for drinking less alcohol:

- Choose non-alcoholic beverages like water, juices and sodas at meals and parties.
- Avoid occasions centered around alcohol.
- Talk to a health care professional if you have trouble limiting alcohol.

Tips for parents and grandparents:

- Avoid making alcohol an essential part of family gatherings.
- When appropriate, discuss the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse with kids. A health care professional or school counselor can help.

6

Protect yourself from the sun.

Sunlight is linked to skin cancer.

Tips for protecting yourself from the sun:

- Stay out of direct sunlight between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm (peak burning hours).
- Use hats, long-sleeve shirts and SPF 15 sunscreens or higher.
- Avoid getting sunburned.
- Do not use sun lamps or tanning booths.

Tips for parents and grandparents:

- Make sure kids are properly protected from the sun with hats, long-sleeve shirts and SPF 15 sunscreens or higher. Serious skin cancer is caused by sunburns in childhood.
- Be an example for your kids to follow.

7

Protect yourself and your partner(s) from sexually transmitted infections.

Some sexually transmitted infections are linked to cancers of the cervix, vagina, anus and liver.

Tips for protecting yourself from sexually transmitted infections:

- Consider not having sex. Abstinence is the best way to protect yourself.
- If you're sexually active, always use a condom and follow other safe sex practices.
- Never rely on your partner to have a condom. Be prepared.

Tips for parents and grandparents:

- When appropriate, talk to your kids about why abstinence or safe sex is important. A health care professional or school counselor can help.

Tests for Cancer

Screening tests can catch cancer early, when it is most treatable. In some cases, a test can even help prevent cancer from developing in the first place. Talk to a health care professional about tests for:

- **Colon and rectal cancer**
- **Breast cancer**
- **Cervical cancer**