

NUTRITION NEWS

Reducing Your Cancer Risk

(NAPS)—While each year 1.5 million new cases of cancer are diagnosed in the U.S., there are steps that can help decrease your risk.

“If you put issues of nutrition, physical activity and tobacco in one basket, that could account for as many as 50 to 60 percent of cancer deaths,” said Dr. Andrew Salner, director of the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center at Hartford Hospital. He also notes that as many as a third of cancers are related to nutrition and physical activity.

What You Can Control

Dr. Salner shares these simple lifestyle changes, which may help boost your cancer defenses:

Tobacco: Put It Out

- Don't start using tobacco, whether cigarettes or smokeless tobacco.

- If you are a smoker or someone in your household is, quit.

Weight: The More Excess You Carry, The Higher Your Risk

- Maintaining a healthy weight is extremely important. From breast, colon and kidney cancers to lymphoma, endometrial and ovarian cancers, many cancers have an increased risk in a person who is overweight or obese. Eat Right And Get Moving.

- Get in at least 30 minutes of rather vigorous exercise at least five days a week. What counts as exercise? Any kind of aerobic activity, but more than just a relaxing walk. Something where you're short of breath, perspire a little bit and put yourself to work.

- Physical activity actually has a double benefit: It'll help you lose weight, which reduces the cancer risk, but it also helps with general health benefits and it increases your cancer defenses in and of itself.

Making The Right Food Choices:

- To get to the right body weight: decrease the amount of calories coming in, reduce fat and carbohydrates, and replace them with healthier foods such as lean protein, fruits and veggies, and whole grains. These foods contain antioxidants and vitamins. They don't have things like hormones or nitrates that exist in certain kinds of meat.

- Decrease saturated fat to less than 30 percent of caloric intake.

- Eat at least five helpings of fruits and vegetables per day.

- Increase intake of whole grains.

- Consume alcohol in moderation only: one glass of wine per day for women, two per day for men maximum.

- In addition to the cancer prevention benefits, dietary, physical activity and weight factors can also help to reduce risk of heart disease and diabetes, and are helpful for general physical health as well.

Screening A Must, For Early Detection:

- Follow the screening guidelines for your age group.

- Get a mammogram every year starting at age 40, in addition to conducting regular breast self-exams and annual provider exams.

- Colorectal screening should take place every five to seven years starting at age 50, and for men, prostate cancer screenings starting at 50 should be discussed with your physician.

- Know your family history and its given risk factors, and be sure to discuss this with your physician, because your screening guidelines may be modified if there is a family history of cancer.

Decompress And Be Aware Of Your Surroundings:

- There's relatively little hard data on stress and cancer, but there may be a link between the two. We need to learn how to deal with stress, have a sense of humor and cope with it as best we can.

- There are known carcinogens in the environment, tobacco smoke being one of the biggest. For those working in certain industries, environmental hazards such as air pollution and other industrial hazards should be monitored. Specific data on how to protect yourself is available from the American Cancer Society and OSHA.

Learn More

More cancer prevention tips and other helpful health information are at www.hartfordhospital.org.



Eating healthy foods and staying fit can help you reach a healthy body weight and boost your cancer defenses.

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