

April: Cancer Control Month

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There's no magic bullet to preventing cancer, but research shows up to two-thirds of cancer deaths are caused by smoking, physical inactivity and poor diet. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States, accounting for almost one in every four deaths. April is Cancer Control Month, a good time to start reducing your risk by making healthier choices that will lead to a longer, healthier life. Below are some tips for eating healthy, being physically active, and getting screened.



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Tips for Making Healthier Choices:

Improve eating habits. Most people cannot overhaul their food habits quickly. Add a few servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Try mixing dark, leafy greens like spinach in a salad and eat a piece of fruit for a snack. On a regular basis, make your diet rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans, and whole grains. Choose lean cuts of meat and eat smaller portions. Prepare meat by baking, broiling, or poaching at lower temperatures.



Be active. Make physical activity a regular part of your family's daily or weekly schedule and write it on a family activity calendar. Keep track of your progress with an exercise chart or on-line tool. Organize school activities around physical activity, walk the dog with your children, or exercise while you watch TV. Ask friends and family to exercise with you, and plan social activities involving exercise.



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Toss tobacco. Reduce cancer risk by quitting tobacco or not starting. Smoking is the cause of more than 80 percent of all lung cancers and 30 percent of all cancer deaths. Non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke are at risk for lung cancer and other respiratory problems. You can add up to 10 years to your life by quitting. Strive to break the addiction, and create smoke-free environments.



Get screened. You have the power to take control of your health and catch many cancers before they start, or at their earliest, most treatable stages. Be familiar with warning signs and symptoms, get regular check-ups and perform self-exams. Some cancers are over 90 percent curable if detected early, so don't forget to schedule your 2013 screening.



Lose excess weight. Being overweight is one of the main risk factors for uterine, colon, breast, esophageal and kidney cancers. Both ovarian and pancreatic cancers have also been linked to excess weight. If you are overweight or obese, losing weight may reduce your cancer risk.



The American Cancer Society's website, <http://www.cancer.org/>, includes a variety of helpful tips, educational resources, and ways to find support and treatment. For more food, nutrition and health information go to www.food.unl.edu or scan the QR code with your smart phone or other electronic device to go straight to the website.



Additional Resources & Links:

- **Colon Cancer Awareness and Prevention.** There are several ways to help reduce your risk and prevent colon cancer. Many of these strategies focus on healthy lifestyle practices such as eating healthy, limiting alcohol, not smoking, and being physically active.
<http://go.unl.edu/830>
- **Tools and Calculators.** In this section you'll find interactive tools, quizzes, and videos to help you learn more about ways to lower your risk for cancer or find it early.
<http://www.cancer.org/healthy/toolsandcalculators/index>
- **Cancer Screening Guidelines.** American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer for most adults.
<http://go.unl.edu/jnh>
- **Stay Away from Tobacco.** Quitting tobacco is not easy, but it can be done. Whether you're a smoker, someone who uses smokeless tobacco, or just someone trying to help a friend or loved one, you'll find the information you need in this section.
<http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/index>
- **Weight Management Resources from UNL Food.** Weight management is about balancing calories consumed with the calories our body "burns off." It is important to consume foods that keep our calories at a desirable level and that also provide sufficient nutrients to keep us healthy. These articles and links provide guidance on choosing foods and planning an activity level for your optimum weight.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/weight-management>

- **Walk Nebraska Newsletters.** Each month these newsletters cover a variety of topics related to getting active by walking year round.
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/walknenewsletters>
- **UNL Extension Calendar – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for April.**
<http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/april>

Sources:

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3. Prevent Cancer Foundation. 2010. Blog: 10 Ways to Reduce Your Cancer Risk.
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