

Reduce your risk of cancer

Not all cancers can be prevented, but we can all take steps to reduce our risk of cancer. Even after a cancer diagnosis, follow these steps, if you can.



Don't smoke.

- The best thing you can do for your health is not to smoke, vape or use any tobacco products.
- Quitting tobacco products reduces your cancer risk.
- For help quitting, visit the HSE Stop Smoking service www.quit.ie or call 1800 201 203.

Second Hand Smoke.

- Second hand tobacco smoke increases cancer risk.
- Make your home, car and workplace smoke free.



Vaccinations can protect against some cancers.

- The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine protects men and women against some cancers. It is offered to first-year students in secondary schools and people who are at increased risk of exposure to HPV.
- The Hepatitis B (HepB) vaccine protects against liver cancer. It is offered to all babies in Ireland and people at high risk of HepB infection, including healthcare workers.
- Visit www.immunisation.ie



Protect skin.

- Reduce risk of skin cancer by protecting your skin from the sun.
- Never use a sunbed.
- Slip on clothing that covers your skin.
- Slop on sunscreen, using factor 30+ for adults and 50+ for children.
- Slap on a wide brimmed hat.
- Seek shade especially between 11am to 3pm.
- Slide on sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Visit www.hse.ie/sunsmart



Take part in cancer screening programmes for:

- Breast cancer (women aged 50-69 years). Visit www.hse.ie/breastcheck
- Cervical cancer (women and people with a cervix aged 25-65 years). Visit www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck
- Bowel cancer (people aged 57-71 years). The age range for BowelScreen is changing over time. Visit www.hse.ie/bowelscreen



Discuss your oral contraceptive or hormone replacement therapy options with your GP.

- These may increase or decrease your risk of cancer. Everyone is different.



Follow your workplace health and safety measures.

- These will help to prevent exposure to substances that can cause cancer.
- If you work outdoors protect your skin from the sun.



Maintain a healthy body weight.

- Avoid weight gain.
- Eating a healthy balanced diet, being physically active, getting enough sleep and taking care of your mental health can all help to maintain a healthy body weight.
- Support options are available to those living with overweight or obesity. Ask your GP for information.



Avoid Alcohol.

- Alcohol increases the risk of at least 7 cancers.
- The less you drink, the lower your risk of cancer.
- Any amount and any type of alcohol increases cancer risk.
- Visit www.askaboutalcohol.ie



Check radon levels.

- Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can increase risk of lung cancer. It forms in soils and rocks, and you can't smell it.
- Learn how to check radon levels in your home and workplace and how to take action.
- Visit www.radon.ie



Eat a healthy balanced diet.

- Include plenty of fruit, vegetables and wholegrains in your diet.
- Limit red meat and avoid processed meat.
- Limit foods high in fat, sugar and salt.
- Your overall diet is more important than focusing on individual foods.



Be physically active every day.

- Any activity is better than none.
- Physical activity can reduce your risk of cancer by promoting healthy hormone and insulin levels, reducing inflammation and helping maintain a healthy body weight.

Each week aim for

- 2 hours and 30 minutes moderate-intensity physical activity
- or
- 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity
- or
- an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity
- and
- muscle strengthening activities at moderate or greater intensity that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.



Consider breastfeeding, if you can.

- Breastfeeding reduces the mother's risk of breast cancer.
- Visit www.mychild.ie



Visit www.hse.ie/preventcancer for more information