

12 Ways to Reduce Cancer Risk

Until very recently, cancer prevention has largely focused on early diagnosis and treatment, also known as secondary prevention. By the time secondary prevention becomes necessary, the disease in question has already taken hold within an individual, and doctors just want to lessen its impact by finding it and treating it early. Alternatively, primary prevention is the practice of avoiding the causes of a disease in order to prevent getting it in the first place. Not nearly enough attention has been paid to primary prevention of cancer, but we do know some things you can do to reduce the chance that you will develop cancer during your lifetime.

Read on to find out about 12 things you can do to avoid cancer.

1. **Avoid smoking, overeating, and overdrinking, and keep moving.** Take the stairs instead of elevators; find a form of exercise you like and commit to doing it with a friend. Plan to walk instead of drive. When driving, stick with the speed limit to save lives, save energy and reduce cancer-causing pollution; speed kills, pollutes and fuels terror.
2. **Use x-rays and other radiation sparingly and keep a record of all x-rays.** The excessive use of x-rays in infants and children may be one of the reasons more young people (those under 40 years of age) are getting cancer and can also contribute to cancer in adults. Earlier this year, the American College of Radiology advised against unnecessary and excessive use of diagnostic radiation in children for this very reason. Before ordering x-rays doctors should carefully weigh the risks and benefits of using MRI, or ultrasound, technologies that do not involve radiation.
3. **Unless someone in your immediate family has had breast cancer before menopause, hold off getting your first mammogram until at least age forty,** or until your doctor advises you start having them—and then have them done sparingly. Mammography does not prevent breast cancer, but can reduce deaths from the disease in post-menopausal women. It is also important to have regular physical exam of breasts by a health professional.
4. **Use hormones sparingly.** Lifetime use of hormones affects cancer risk. **Consider alternatives to chemical contraception such as IUDs and condoms (which also protect against sexually transmitted disease).** Avoid long term use of medications that contain hormones, including hormone replacement therapy.
5. **Test your basement for radon and if you live in an area with uncertain water quality, use a simple filter.** An invisible gas, radon can seep into homes from the ground and increase the risk of lung cancer. It can easily and inexpensively be remedied.
6. **Do not consume food and beverages that contain aspartame.** Sweeten your food with good old-fashioned sugar or honey, or stevia instead. Despite having FDA approval, aspartame, the sugar substitute, was never given a green light by scientists—all were concerned about its potential to cause cancer. New independent studies raise further concerns about its long term safety.
7. Use cell phones with an earpiece and speakerphone so the phone itself is not held up against your head. Children should not use cell phones. Studies claiming that there is no

link between cell phone use and brain cancer were not conducted on people who used cell phones as much as the average person today. Cell phones emit low doses of microwave radiation that destroy rat brain cells and memory and reach one inch into the human brain. While British authorities recommend that children not use cell phones at all, some American firms are pushing phones for five year olds.

8. **Buy local foods in season from farmers who use fewer pesticides.** Use omega-3-fatty acid supplements free of pollutants and eat a diverse diet, rich in vitamin D, calcium and fiber.
9. **Don't put anything on your baby's skin that you can't eat.** The materials that create "no more tears" in baby shampoo are banned in several countries, because they cause cancer in animals. In some cases lotions used on the heads of African-American babies caused development of breasts and pubic hair. The FDA has no authority to regulate any of these harmful compounds in personal care products, unlike the European Union.
10. **Look under your sink and read the labels on your cleaning products**—in general, the fewer ingredients they have, the better for you they are. Baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, and toothpaste can be used to clean most things around the home. Some room deodorizers and mothballs contain carcinogens.
11. **Don't microwave anything in plastic, no matter what the directions say.** Some plastic chemicals can leach into food.
12. Unlike nearly all industrial nations of the world, America and Canada have not banned asbestos. **Before doing home renovations and repair of attics, roofing, ceiling and flooring tiles, find out if they contain asbestos and hire certified contractors if they do.** Zonolite attic insulation and some forms of kitty litter contain asbestos-related materials. Half of all people with a rare form of cancer thought to be uniquely tied with asbestos called mesothelioma have no known workplace contact with asbestos.

Through leading a healthy life and avoiding certain known carcinogens, it is possible to reduce your lifetime risk of developing cancer. It is true that much remains to be learned about the environmental causes of cancer. While researchers continue to explore the causes, we can use what is already known to start practicing cancer prevention today.



Mitchell Gaynor explores the environmental exposures that contribute to cancer growth. “Everyone is walking around with cancer in their bodies.” He explains that the strategy is not to eradicate every cancer cell but rather to keep cancer cells dormant so that they do not become active. He discusses the key things each person can do to protect themselves from toxic environmental exposures such as flame retardants, phthalates, dioxins, white sugar and radio frequency radiation. “Be careful with cell phones and electronic items, use wired rather than wireless when possible.” He details detoxifying enzymes and foods we can eat to increase our bodies’ ability to fight cancer.

Dr. Mitchell Gaynor is a board-certified medical oncologist, internist and hematologist, Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College. Dr. Gaynor has served as the medical director and director of medical oncology at the Weill Cornell Center for Complementary and Integrative Medicine.



Environmental Health Trust applauds this important effort of leading Canadian scientists to identify avoidable causes of cancer in the environment today.

Rethinking Carcinogens

[Executive Summary](#)

[The Halifax Project: Complete vs. Partial Carcinogens](#)

[“Hallmarks of Cancer:” How Normal Cells Turn into Cancer Cells](#)

[Comparing Cancer Risk Factors: Should We Be Concerned?](#)

[Conclusion and Recommendations](#)

[Appendix I](#)

[References](#)

[Nine tips for reducing cancer risk](#)

[The Halifax Project](#)

[Prevent Cancer Now](#)

Source: <https://ehtrust.org/take-action/educate-yourself/cancer-prevention-facts/>