

10 Ways To Lower Your Cancer Risk

Cancer is the second-leading cause of death in New York City. It can affect people of all racial and ethnic groups. There are some risk factors for cancer you cannot change, such as your age and family's health history. However, here are 10 things you can do to help lower your cancer risk.

1 If you smoke, try to quit.

- The more you smoke, the higher your cancer risk. If you quit, your risk will lower over time. Quitting increases chances of survival, including in people who have cancer.
- Talk to your health care provider about medication and counseling options. These can help reduce your cravings and double your chances of quitting.
- Visit nysmokefree.com or call 866-NY-QUITS (866-697-8487) to talk to a quit coach and apply for a free starter kit of nicotine medications.



2 Eat fewer processed meats.

- Processed meats are meats that have been salted, cured, fermented or smoked, or have preservatives. Common types include bacon, ham, sausage, deli meat or cold cuts, and jerky.
- Processed meats have been linked to cancer.
- You can eat fewer processed meats by getting protein from plant-based food, such as beans, lentils, tofu, nuts and seeds, instead.



3 Eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

- Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables may lower your risk for some cancers. Add different colored fruits and vegetables, including fresh, frozen or canned varieties, to your plate. Make sure to choose no- or low-sodium products.



4 Drink less alcohol.

- Drinking alcohol can increase your risk for many types of cancer, like liver and breast cancer.
- The more heavily and often you drink, the greater your risk for cancer. All types of alcoholic drinks increase your risk.
- Talk to your provider about how to lower or stop your drinking if you are concerned about your alcohol use.



5 Increase your physical activity.

- Exercising regularly can protect against cancer. It is also good for your health no matter what your weight is.
- Generally, adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise (like walking or biking) or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise (like swimming laps or jumping rope) every week. The more you exercise, the lower your risk for many cancers.
- You can build more exercise into your day by using the stairs at work, walking with friends, biking to the store or getting off the subway a stop early.



6 Try to maintain your weight.

- Weight gain can lead to having overweight or obesity and increase your risk for many cancers.
- Losing weight can be hard, but maintaining your weight and avoiding weight gain can help keep you healthier.
- Talk to your provider about your weight goal and what you can do to achieve it.



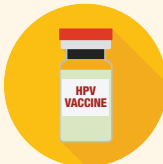
7 Protect your skin from ultraviolet (UV) rays.

- The biggest risk for skin cancer is UV ray exposure. Sources of UV rays include sunlight and indoor tanning.
- Wear protective clothing and sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 15 when in the sun.
- A new or changing mole on your body could be a sign of skin cancer. Talk to your provider if you notice any changes in your skin.



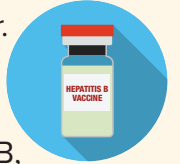
8 Get vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV).

- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S.
- The HPV vaccine protects against HPV infections that can cause cancer. It is recommended for most children starting at age 9 and approved for some adults up to age 45. Ask your provider if and when you should get vaccinated against HPV.



9 Get vaccinated against hepatitis B.

- Hepatitis B can damage your liver. This may lead to liver cancer.
- Ask your provider if you should get vaccinated against hepatitis B, which can help lower your liver cancer risk.



10 Get screened for cancers.

- Screening can help detect cancer early when it is easier to treat and prevent some cancers.
- Ask your provider about your risk for certain cancers and when to get screened. Your provider may recommend earlier or more frequent screening, depending on your risk. Here are some general recommendations:
 - People ages 50 to 80 who have a history of smoking may qualify for a yearly lung cancer screening called low-dose computed tomography.
 - People age 45 or older should get screened for colon cancer with a colonoscopy every 10 years, or a stool-based test every year or three years.
 - Women ages 40 to 49 may choose to start screening for breast cancer. Women ages 50 to 74 should get a mammogram every two years.
 - People ages 21 to 29 should get screened for cervical cancer with a Pap test every three years. People ages 30 to 65 should get a Pap test alone every three years, an HPV test alone every five years, or a combination of a Pap test and HPV test every five years.



For more information, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://www.nyc.gov/health) and search for **cancer prevention and screening**.