

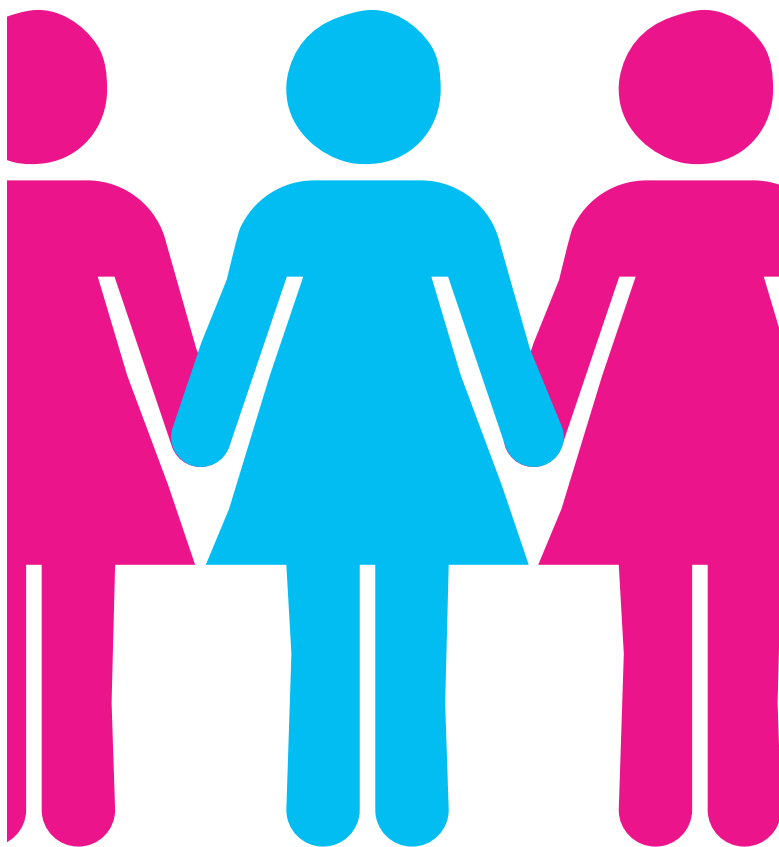
REDUCING CANCER RISK

WHAT WOMEN CAN DO

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CANCER
RESEARCH
UK





The most common cancers in women in the UK are breast, lung, bowel, womb and ovarian. But did you know that lifestyle can affect your risk of getting these cancers?

Cancer is not just down to fate. There are lots of small changes you can make that can reduce the risk. Living healthily is not a guarantee, but it can stack the odds of avoiding cancer in your favour.

Cancer is more common in older people, but it's never too late to make healthy choices, for yourself or loved ones, and there's a wide range of support available.

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This leaflet tells you about:

- what women can do to reduce the risk of cancer
- cancer screening
- the importance of early diagnosis.



What else can I do?

Get to know your body

Your doctor will want to know if you notice any changes that are unusual or don't go away. It probably won't be cancer, but it's better to get checked.

The chance of survival is better when cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, compared to a later stage. So spotting cancer early can make a real difference.

Know about cancer screening

Cancer screening tests can help detect the disease at an early stage before symptoms have a chance to develop, and some can prevent cancer too.

There are 3 national cancer screening programmes available to UK women who are registered with a doctor – cervical, breast and bowel screening.

For more information, including the age ranges for screening where you are, visit www.spotcancerearly.com/screening



The benefits of stopping smoking

If you are a smoker, stopping is the best thing you can do for your health. Smoking causes lung cancer – and at least a dozen other types (including cervical and ovarian cancer) as well as many other health problems like heart disease too.

Quitters can gain up to 10 years of life. It's always worth quitting, no matter how long you've smoked.

Those around you will be healthier because passive smoking also causes cancer. And you'll save money too.

Go to www.nhs.uk/smokefree or talk to your doctor for free support in quitting.



Watching your weight

Many types of cancer are more common in people who are overweight or obese. Where fat is stored on your body also affects your health - the risk of some cancers increases along with increasing waist size.

Tips for keeping weight in check:

- Eating healthily, cutting back on alcohol and being more active will all help.
- Try sticking to a meal routine and be careful with portion sizes.
- Ask your GP or pharmacist about local lifestyle support services.

Hormones and cancer

Reproductive factors that influence your hormone levels (such as not breastfeeding and not having children) are linked to some female cancer types. You can't necessarily control all of these factors but keeping a healthy weight can help to keep hormone levels under control, especially after the menopause.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and the birth control Pill can increase the risk of some cancers. But the Pill can also decrease the risk of other cancer types. So talk through your options with your doctor if you're concerned about HRT or the Pill.

Tips for building healthy habits:

1. Take a look at your lifestyle at the moment and decide what area(s) from this leaflet you might want to change
2. Set yourself goals. Remember even small changes can make a big difference
3. Tick the tips or support services you think might help you
4. Make specific plans for what you'll do, where and when e.g. I will walk on my lunch break on Tuesday and Thursday
5. Keeping track of your progress is important – will you use a calendar or your phone?

If you're not sure or want more support, discuss this leaflet with your GP, practice nurse or local pharmacist.



A healthy balanced diet

To reduce your risk of cancer enjoy a healthy balanced diet with lots of fruit, vegetables and fibre and cut back on red or processed meat, salt and saturated fat.

Some tips to get you started:

- Try swapping processed meats like ham, bacon or sausages for fish or chicken.
- Don't forget your 5 fruit and veg a day.
- Try wholegrain options of bread, pasta and cereals.
- Look out for salt content in ready meals and processed food.

For more advice visit www.cruk.org/diet or www.nhs.uk/livewell



The more active you are the better

At least 30 minutes of moderate activity a day, 5 days a week, is recommended for a positive effect on your health. Moderate activity is anything that gets you warm and out of breath.

It's not too late to start being more active – even starting after the menopause can reduce breast cancer risk.

Make movement part of your daily routine:

- Walk more - to the shops or in your lunch break.
- Housework and gardening count too if you're warm and out of breath.
- See what's available at your local leisure centre or village hall.



It made me think about how I needed to overhaul my lifestyle

Justine Sheils
Cancer survivor

"Being diagnosed with cancer gave me one heck of a wake up call. It's been a horrible experience but it did make me think about how I need to overhaul my lifestyle.

So I've taken up running, I make sure I'm eating a healthy diet and getting my 5 fruit and vegetables every day and I've cut back on alcohol. I feel so lucky to have been given a second chance and I wouldn't waste it for the world."



Cut back on alcohol

All alcoholic drinks – beer, wine and spirits – raise the chances of developing cancer. The less alcohol you drink, the more you reduce the risk of cancer. It is harmful whether you drink in one session or spread it out over the week.

Tips for cutting back on alcohol:

- If you drink, try not to have more than 1 alcoholic drink a day.
- Have some alcohol-free days each week.
- Choose a smaller glass or lower strength drink.

For more advice visit www.cruk.org/alcohol or www.change4life.org



Stay safe in the sun

We all need some sun, particularly for healthy bones. But, it is important to enjoy the sun safely, and to take care not to burn. Whether you're at home or abroad, when the sun is strong protect your skin with shade, clothing and sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and 4 stars.



Infections

Some infections such as HPV (human papillomavirus), hepatitis B and C can cause cancer. Using a condom can reduce the chances of getting or spreading these infections. And not sharing needles will lower your risk of getting hepatitis.

How you could reduce the risk of these cancers:

Food pipe

- Be a non-smoker
- Drink less alcohol
- Keep a healthy weight
- Eat more fruit and veg

Breast

- Keep a healthy weight
- Drink less alcohol
- Be more active

Bowel

- Be a non-smoker
- Drink less alcohol
- Eat less red and processed meat
- Eat more fibre
- Keep a healthy weight
- Be more active

Ovary

- Be a non-smoker
- Keep a healthy weight

Skin

- Enjoy the sun safely

Lung

- Be a non-smoker
- Eat more fruit and veg

Kidney and pancreas

- Be a non-smoker
- Keep a healthy weight

Womb

- Keep a healthy weight
- Be more active

There are over 200 types of cancer but these are some of the most common.

Further information

For more about healthy choices that could reduce cancer risk, visit www.cruk.org/health

For information about cancer visit www.cruk.org.uk/about-cancer

For more about the signs and symptoms of cancer visit www.spotcancerearly.com

All our leaflets are thoroughly researched and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. They are reviewed by independent experts and updated regularly. You can order our full range of leaflets free online at www.cruk.org/leaflets

About Cancer Research UK

CRUK pioneers life-saving research to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. From our volunteers and supporters to our scientists, doctors and nurses, we're all here to save more lives and prevent, control and cure all cancers.

Together we will beat cancer sooner.
If you want to join the fight, call **0300 123 1861**
or visit www.cruk.org

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