

Your Health Matters

WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR CANCER RISK

If you could take action to lower your risk of getting cancer, would you do it? Studies show that almost half of cancer cases in the U.S. are preventable. In other words, if people would choose to eat healthier, stop smoking, exercise, and protect their skin, they could dramatically lower their risk of getting cancer.

Studies show that quitting smoking can lower a person's risk of death from cancer, but 9% of cancer survivors continue to smoke.

Most cases of melanoma (skin cancer) are caused by overexposure to the sun, tanning beds or booths, and sunlamps, but nearly 2 in 10 melanoma survivors report getting sunburned and 1.7% say they still use tanning booths or beds.

Poor lifestyle choices that put a person at higher risk for getting cancer in the first place, also increase their risk of cancer coming back and shortening their life.

By making healthier lifestyle choices you can lower your risk of cancer, improve cancer treatment outcomes, and increase your chances of living a longer, healthier life.

Don't smoke. If you need help to quit, you can call the Missouri QuitLine at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) and talk to a trained counselor for free. You can also call the National Cancer Institute at 1-877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848) to speak to a trained counselor.

Protect your skin. Avoid tanning beds, booths or sunlamps. When outdoors, wear sunscreen with "broad spectrum" protection and an SPF that is appropriate for your exposure – at least SPF 15. Avoid the sun during peak hours (10 am – 4 pm) and stay in the shade. Wear a hat, cotton clothing with a tight weave, and sunglasses that block 99-100% of both UVB and UVA rays.

Get moving. New studies suggest that regular aerobic exercise can lower the chance of recurring cancer and the risk of death for survivors of breast cancer, prostate cancer and colorectal cancer. Walk, swim, bicycle, lift weights. Talk to your health care provider about which exercise activities are best for you.

Eat healthy. Choose fresh fruits and vegetables in a variety of colors for a wealth of vitamins and nutrients. Cut down on sweets, salt, and fatty foods.

Lower your risk for cancers and build a healthier body at the same time. The Montgomery County Health Department loves taking care of your family, and works every day to protect, promote and improve health in our community. Learn more on Facebook, by calling (573) 564-2495 or by visiting www.montgomerycountyhealth.org. ■

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