

Move your body



Physical activity and cancer prevention

We know that by being physically active every day, enjoying a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy body weight, you can lower your risk of developing cancer. We know that these factors account for at least 30 per cent of all cancers.

Physical inactivity is an important risk factor for bowel cancer and breast cancer, and possibly prostate, uterine and lung cancer. Being inactive also contributes to weight gain. Overweight and obesity also increase cancer risk.

The good news is you can lower your cancer risk by being physically active. Physical activity regulates hormones such as insulin-like growth factor and oestrogen and affects the speed that food passes through the bowel, reducing contact with any potential carcinogens.

Physical activity assists in maintaining a healthy body weight and can improve energy levels and feelings of well being.

Being more active is one of the best things you can do for yourself

For good health, put together at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all days of the week. It doesn't have to be continuous, 3 x 10 minutes sessions are also good. Each activity session should last at least 10 minutes.

To reduce your cancer risk, the more physically active you are the better. As fitness improves aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 30 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity every day.

Moderate physical activity includes any activity in which you can still hold a conversation, such as brisk walking.

Vigorous physical activity includes any activity that makes you 'huff and puff', such as fast swimming, cycling, jogging etc.

Getting started

If you have not been physically active for some time, it is best to start slowly. Going too hard too early can cause pain and injury.

Tips for getting started

- Get friends to join you. They will give you company and motivation.
- Think of movement as an opportunity and plan ahead.
- Set goals and challenge yourself to build up your physical activity levels.

- If you are being active outdoors remember to be SunSmart.
- Drink water before, during and after your activity.

Tips for home

- Turn off the TV or computer and use this time to be active.
- Walk or cycle to the local shops.
- Do gardening or housework.
- Be active as a family.
- Walk your children to school.

Tips for work

- Catch public transport to work, get off a stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
- Park your car 10-15 minutes from work, and walk the rest of the way.
- Walk with colleagues at lunchtime.
- Take the stairs, not the lift.

Being active, like healthy eating, requires some thought each day. It also needs to be kept up over a lifetime. Regular physical activity will give you extra energy and make you feel better.

Remember, if you have any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.

Ways to reduce your cancer risk

How do you stack up?

(Tick if you need to take action)

- Quit smoking
- Be SunSmart
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Be more physically active
- Eat a healthy, well balanced diet
- Avoid or limit alcohol intake

Where can I get reliable information?

Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20

Information and support for you and your family for the cost of a local call anywhere in Australia.

Cancer Council Australia website

(with links to state and territory Cancer Councils)

www.cancer.org.au