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# CANCER RISK REDUCTION

Most people are frightened when they hear the word “CANCER” because they think it is an inevitable disease that often results in death. The good news is, you can do something to help lower your risk of cancer. Early detection can save your life.

## What is Cancer?

Cancer is a group of many diseases, which are due to uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells. These cells may grow into masses of tissue called tumors. Tumors may be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous) to other parts of the body. Malignant tumors invade and destroy nearby tissues and organs and can even spread (metastasize) to other parts of the body.

## Warning Signals of Cancer

1. Change in bowel or bladder habits
2. A sore that does not heal
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge
4. Thickening or lump in breast or elsewhere
5. Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
6. Obvious change in wart or mole
7. Nagging cough or hoarseness
8. Unexplained weight loss

Pain is seldom an early sign of cancer. If you have any of the above warning signals, see your doctor immediately.

## Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

About 80% cancers are related to lifestyle and environmental factors.

By reducing or eliminating exposure to cancer-causing agents (carcinogens), you can minimize your risk of developing some cancers.

Here are some cancer risk reduction tips:

- Control weight
- Don't smoke
- Drink alcohol only in moderation (1-2 drinks a day)
- Avoid too much sunlight (wear protective clothing, use sunscreen lotion)
- Avoid unnecessary X-rays
- Follow health and safety rules at workplace
- Eat foods high in fiber (fruits, vegetables, whole grain) and low in fat
- Limit consumption of salt-cured, salt-pickled, and smoked foods
- Discuss with your doctor about the safety of hormone replacement therapy
- Include cancer-related check-ups in your regular physical exam
- Learn the warning signals of cancer

As the saying goes, “Prevention is better than Cure”. You can help reduce your own cancer risk by taking control of your lifestyle!

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