Practise safer sex

Some sexually transmitted infections can cause cancer.

Nearly all cases of cervical cancer are caused by a sexually transmitted infection called human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV infection is very common, but most women who have it do not develop cervical cancer.

The hepatitis B virus is a common cause of cancer that starts in the liver. The virus can be spread through unprotected sex.

Using a condom can reduce your chance of getting or spreading these viruses. You may not know if you or someone else has an infection so it is always best to practise safer sex.

Further information

About lifestyle choices
For more about healthy choices that could reduce your cancer risk, visit www.cancerresearchuk.org/health

For help with giving up smoking call Quitline free on 0800 002200.

About cancer
For information about living with cancer visit www.cancerhelp.org.uk

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our information nurses on freephone 0808 8004040.

Order more leaflets
You can order our full range of leaflets free online at www.cancerresearchuk.org/leaflets

About Cancer Research UK
Cancer Research UK is the world’s leading charity dedicated to finding out how to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer. If you would like to support our work, please call 020 7121 6699 or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org

Together we will beat cancer
More than one in three people in the UK will develop cancer during their lifetime.

Did you know?
• Developing cancer is not just down to fate.
• We have control over many of the things that affect our risk of cancer.

In this leaflet you can find out about:
• lifestyle choices that affect your risk of cancer
• how you can take action to reduce your cancer risk.

Being a non-smoker
Smoking is the single biggest cause of cancer in the world and leads to nearly all lung cancers.
Smoking causes 13 other types of cancer. It also damages your skin, turns your teeth yellow and makes your breath smell bad.
Smoking is very expensive. Smoking 20 a day for the next 20 years would cost you around £40,000.
If you smoke, giving up is the most important thing you can do for your health. The earlier you quit smoking the more damage you can undo.
In the UK, smoking kills five times more people than road accidents, overdoses, murder and suicide all put together.

Keeping a healthy weight
Being overweight does not only cause heart disease and diabetes, it also causes cancer.
Keeping a healthy weight is a great way to reduce your risk of cancer.
As a nation we are getting fatter. More than half of all adults in the UK are overweight or very overweight.
Being overweight increases the risk of seven different types of cancer.
When it comes to losing weight and keeping it off, long-term changes to your lifestyle are much more likely to work than quick-fix solutions.

Drinking less alcohol
Drinking too much alcohol increases your risk of seven different types of cancer.
The more you cut down on alcohol the more you reduce your cancer risk.
All types of alcohol can increase your risk of cancer, including beer, spirits and wine.
There is limited risk if you only drink a little, such as one small drink a day for women or two small drinks a day for men.
If you drink alcohol and smoke, your risk of developing cancer is even greater.

Being active
By being active, you can reduce your risk of bowel and breast cancer.
The more active you are the more you reduce your cancer risk.
Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity a day, on five or more days a week.
Moderate activity is anything that makes you feel warm or slightly out of breath, and does not have to cost a penny.
Activities can include brisk walking, gardening, DIY, housework, cycling, jogging or swimming – whatever suits you.

Eating healthily
What you eat can affect your risk of developing cancers of the stomach, bowel, mouth and gullet.
To reduce your risk of cancer, eat a healthy, balanced diet that is high in fibre, vegetables and fruit, and low in red and processed meat, saturated fat and salt.
Eating lots of red and processed meat increases the risk of bowel cancer; the third most common cancer in the UK.
By eating more fibre you can reduce the risk of bowel cancer. Get plenty of fibre by choosing wholegrain varieties of bread, cereals, rice and pasta.
Eat your five-a-day, they are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. Supplements cannot replace a balanced diet and in some cases may even increase your cancer risk.