



Cancer Facts for Men

The cancers that most often affect men are prostate, colon, lung, and skin cancers. Knowing about these cancers and what you can do to help prevent them or find them early (when they are small and easier to treat) may help save your life.

Prostate cancer

The chance of getting prostate cancer goes up as a man gets older. Most prostate cancers are found in men over the age of 65. For reasons that are still unknown, African American men are more likely to develop prostate cancer than men of any other races. Having one or more close relatives with prostate cancer also increases a man's risk of having prostate cancer.

What you can do

[The American Cancer Society recommends](#) that men make an informed decision with their health care provider about whether to be tested for prostate cancer. Research has not yet proven that the benefits outweigh the harms of testing and treatment. The American Cancer Society believes that men should not be tested without learning about what we know and don't know about the risks and possible benefits of testing and treatment.

Starting at age 50, talk to your provider about the pros and cons of testing so you can [decide if getting tested is the right choice for you](#). If you are African American or have a father or brother who had prostate cancer before age 65, you should have this talk with your provider starting at age 45. If you decide to be tested, you should have the PSA blood test with or without a rectal exam. How often you are tested will depend on your PSA level.

Colon cancer

Colon cancers are commonly called cancers of the colon and rectum. People with a personal or family history of this cancer, or who have polyps in their colon or rectum, or those with inflammatory bowel disease are more likely to have colon cancer. Also, being overweight, eating a diet mostly of high-fat foods (especially from animal sources), smoking, and being inactive can make a person more likely to have this cancer.

What you can do

Colon cancer almost always starts with a polyp – a small growth on the lining of the colon or rectum. Testing can save lives by finding polyps before they become cancer. If pre-cancerous polyps are removed, colon cancer can be prevented.

For people at average risk of colon and rectal cancer, the American Cancer Society recommends starting regular screening at age 45. People older than 75 should talk with their health care provider about whether continuing screening is right for them.

Screening can be done either with a sensitive test that looks for signs of cancer in a person's stool (a stool-based test), or with an exam that looks at the colon and rectum (a visual exam).

Stool-based tests

- Yearly fecal immunochemical test (FIT) *, or
- Yearly guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) *, or
- Multi-targeted stool DNA test (MT-sDNA) every 3 years*

Visual (structural) exams of the colon and rectum

- Colonoscopy every 10 years, or
- CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years*, or
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years*

*If a person chooses to be screened with a test other than colonoscopy, any abnormal test result should be followed up with colonoscopy.

If you are at high risk of colon cancer based on family history or other factors, you may need to start testing before age 45. Talk to a health care provider about your risk for colon cancer to know when you should start testing.

Lung cancer

At least 8 out of 10 lung cancer deaths are thought to result from smoking. But people who don't smoke can also have lung cancer.

What you can do

Lung cancer is one of the few cancers that can often be prevented simply by not smoking. If you are a smoker, ask a health care provider to help you quit. If you don't smoke, don't start, and avoid breathing in other people's smoke. If your friends and loved ones are smokers, help them quit. For help quitting, call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 to find out how we can help improve your chances of quitting for good.

If you are a current or former smoker aged 55 to 74 years and in fairly good health, you might benefit from screening for lung cancer with a yearly low-dose CT scan (LDCT). The American Cancer Society recommends screening for certain people at higher risk for lung cancer. Talk to a health care provider about your risk of lung cancer, and about the possible benefits, limits, and harms of getting tested for early lung cancer.

Skin cancer

Anyone who spends time in the sun can have skin cancer. People with fair skin, especially those with blond or red hair, are more likely to get skin cancer than people with darker coloring. People who have had a close family member with melanoma and those who had severe sunburns as children are more likely to get skin cancer.

What you can do

Most [skin cancers can be prevented](#) by limiting exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun and other sources like tanning beds. [When outside](#), try to stay in the shade, especially during the middle of the day. If you're going to be in the sun, wear hats with brims, long-sleeve shirts, sunglasses, and use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher on all exposed skin. If you have children, protect them from the sun and don't let them get sunburned. Do not use tanning beds or lamps.

Be aware of all moles and spots on your skin, and report any changes to a health care provider right away.

Take control of your health, and reduce your cancer risk.

- Stay away from all forms of tobacco.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Get moving with regular physical activity.
- Eat healthy with plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink (if you drink at all).
- Protect your skin.
- Know yourself, your family history, and your risks.
- Get regular check-ups and cancer screening tests.
- [References](#)

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