

National Call to Action on Cancer Prevention and Survivorship



cancer

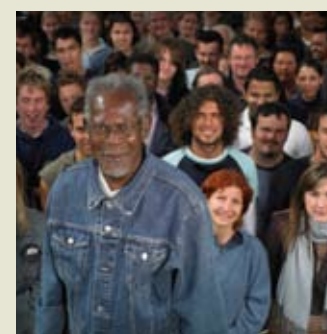


what it means to
you

cancer

About this booklet...

The U.S. Surgeon General serves as the nation's doctor. There have been only 17 Surgeons General in the history of our nation. Four of the former Surgeons General came together in 2008 to collaborate with numerous people and organizations to develop a *National Call to Action on Cancer Prevention and Survivorship*. The Surgeons General led the *National Call to Action* to protect Americans from cancer, promote improved survivorship, and advance our nation's health. This booklet explains what the *National Call to Action* says and what it means to you.



In the
United States,
cancer kills one
of every
four people.

Cancer hurts us all.

Cancer touches every American life. Cancer spares no one. It affects people of all ages. It strikes all races. It does not care if you are a man or a woman. Yet many of us believe that “it won’t happen to me.”

This year, more than 1.4 million Americans will hear the words, “You have cancer.” More than half a million of us will die from it this year. Because of better screening and treatment, today there are 12 million cancer survivors in the United States.

Cancer is more likely to kill us if we are uninsured, a minority, live in a rural area, or are poor. For people under 85, cancer is the leading cause of death. Cancer costs Americans over \$400 billion every year in treatment and in lost work – more than any other disease.

prevention



We can prevent most cancers.

As many as 2 out of 3 cases of cancer are the result of things that we do – or things we do not do. We have the ability to stop hundreds of thousands of Americans from ever facing the disease. The war on cancer begins with prevention.

You can take steps now to prevent cancer. About 170,000 cancer deaths in 2008 will be caused by tobacco use – all of which could have been prevented. Up to one-third of cancer deaths may be related to being overweight, unhealthy eating, and physical inactivity. Other cancers are caused by infections. You can help prevent these by choosing a healthy lifestyle, getting recommended vaccinations, and following your doctor's advice.

We do not yet know how to prevent all cancers. We need more research to understand some of the causes. But you can lower your risk of many types of cancer.



Do not use tobacco.

Tobacco causes 1 in 3 cancer deaths. Smoking is the main preventable cause of cancer in America. Yet more than 45 million Americans continue to smoke. If we stop using tobacco, one-third of cancer deaths could be prevented.

Smoking also kills people who don't smoke. Each year, secondhand smoke causes the same types of cancer in non-smokers as in those who smoke. Cigarette smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals. At least 69 are poisons or cause cancer.

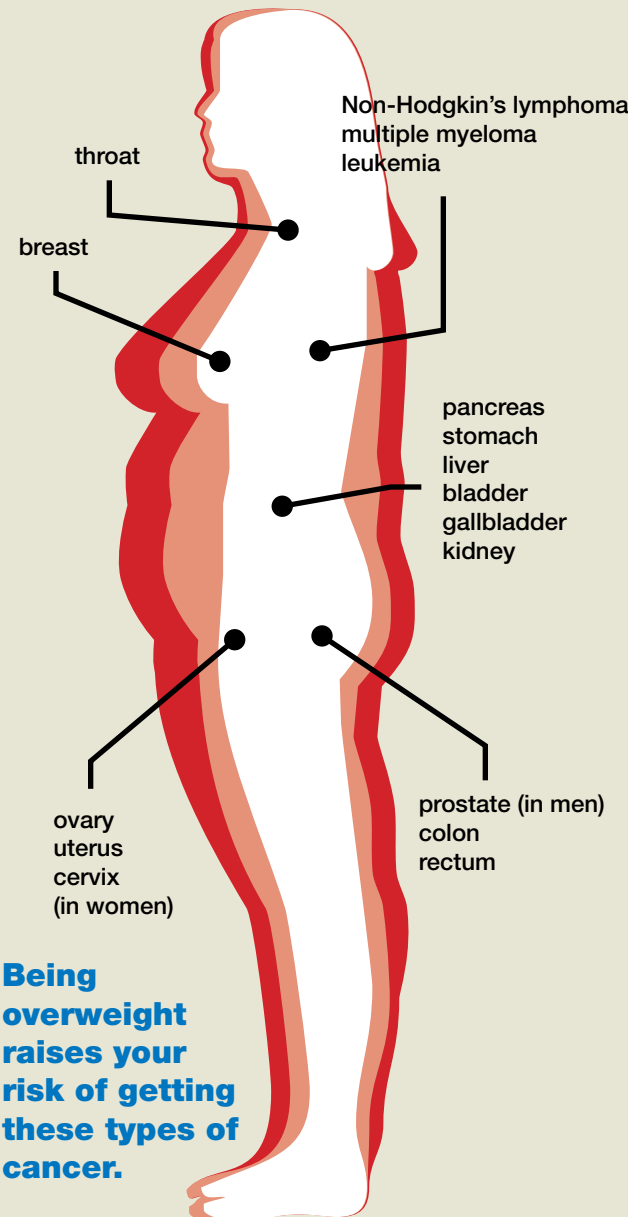
If you smoke, talk with your doctor or other health professional about quitting.

Each year, more states and cities ban smoking from public places to protect people from secondhand tobacco smoke. Communities can add policies to protect people from secondhand smoke and keep tobacco away from youth.

Maintain a healthy weight.

Today, almost two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese, and the numbers are growing. The effects of being overweight on health are staggering, not just on cancer, but also on other chronic diseases.

Cancer deaths are 50 percent higher in obese men and 60 percent higher in obese women than in healthy-weight men and women.



Being overweight raises your risk of getting these types of cancer.



I know it's good to eat healthy now, but I come from a culture where our food is pretty high in fat. But now my wife and I are eating healthy and exercising so we set a good example for our children. It's important to get them to eat fruits and vegetables. Us too. I want to be around to meet my grandchildren."

Julio Valdez, 31 years old, father of four children

Eat more fruits and vegetables.

Some foods can help protect us from cancer. What we choose to eat can make a difference in preventing cancer. Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Eat more whole grains. Stay away from foods that are high in fat and calories.

Be active every day.

Exercise helps prevent cancer. Exercise can help cancer survivors cope and recover from cancer, too.

Children should be active at least an hour every day. Adults need at least 30 minutes of activity, such as brisk walking, every day. Yet, one in four adults say they do no exercise at all.

Talk with your doctor or other health professional about an exercise plan that is right for you.



Cut your risk for these types of cancer.

You can lower your risk by following these steps.

Type of Cancer	How to prevent it
Lung	Do not use tobacco Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke
Esophagus	Do not use tobacco Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day or less Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day
Larynx	Do not use tobacco Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day or less
Mouth and gum	Do not use tobacco Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke
Colon and rectal	Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day Choose low fat foods Maintain a healthy weight Do not use tobacco Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day or less Exercise
Skin	Protect yourself from sunburn Cover your skin during the day Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher Do not use tanning beds
Liver	Ask your doctor about immunization Do not have unprotected sex Never share needles for drugs Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day or less
Cervical	Ask your doctor about immunization Do not have unprotected sex
Kaposi's sarcoma	Do not have unprotected sex Never share needles for drugs
Breast	Maintain a healthy weight Exercise Limit calories from fat



Steps for America in the fight against cancer

- Ban smoking from restaurants and public places
- Offer resources to help smokers quit
- Encourage healthy eating
- Make affordable, healthy foods available in all communities
- Offer healthier foods and beverages in school lunches and worksite vending
- Give nutrition information on restaurant menus
- Encourage physical activity

It's up to **all** of us.

To stop cancer, we must stop smoking. We must eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and less fat. We must work up a sweat with exercise. Doctors and other health professionals must give us help and advice on quitting smoking, diet, and exercise. Businesses can offer healthy foods at work and improve health and exercise programs for their employees. And community and government leaders must enact tobacco control laws and improve the standards for school nutrition and physical activity programs.



If our nation is committed to improving cancer research and resources and empowering people to take action, we can beat this disease.



A good rule of thumb is to fill 2/3 of your plate with vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.



Follow recommended cancer screening guidelines.

Everyone has a chance of developing cancer. Catching it early can make a difference in treatment options, living well, and living longer. If every American were screened on the recommended schedule, we could successfully treat many early-stage cancers.

Your doctor can screen for many types of cancer. Colon cancer is a good example. During screening, doctors can identify precancerous growths and remove them.

Use the chart on page 10 to keep track of your cancer screening.

Your choices make a difference.

Surviving cancer is more possible now than it has ever been. Following up on an abnormal screening is your first important step. Follow-up tests are essential to confirm the diagnosis. Cancer treatment is different for everyone. Your treatment options depend on your type and stage of cancer. Talk to your doctor or other health professional. Always ask questions so you can make better decisions about your treatment.

You need to make decisions that are right for you. To learn more about your cancer type and what your options are, search websites or go to your library or bookstore. You may also want to seek out other survivors.

Screening is your weapon against cancer.

Discuss this chart with your doctor or other health professional for screenings that can save your life.

Screening for...	Age	How often?	My Exam Date	My Next Exam	My Next Exam
Women					
Breast Cancer					
Self Exam	20 and over	every month			
Doctor Exam	20 to 39	every 3 years			
Mammography	40 and over	every year			
Cervical Cancer					
Doctor Exam	21* and over	every year			
Men					
Testicular Cancer					
Self Exam	18 and over	every month			
Doctor Exam	18 and over	every year			
Prostate Cancer					
Doctor Exam	50 and over	every year			
Everyone					
Colon Cancer					
Doctor Exam	50 and over	every 5 to 10 years			
Skin Cancer					
Self Exam	18 and over	every month			
Doctor Exam	20 to 39	every 3 years			
Doctor Exam	40 and over	every year			

*or when you become sexually active

Be sure to ask about screening earlier and more often if you know you have cancer risk factors such as family history or personal history of cancer.

Survivorship is living **beyond** cancer.

Today there are 12 million cancer survivors in the United States.

From the time you are diagnosed with cancer, you are a survivor. Your caregivers, family, and friends are survivors, too.

Survivors need to continue to make healthy life choices. Do not use tobacco or be around secondhand smoke. Eat a healthy diet, with mostly plant based foods. Be physically active, as your doctor directs. Make sure you complete the follow-up treatments your doctor recommends.



“Survivorship to me means overcoming, moving on. Not just a survivor of cancer; a survivor of just life in general. It is doing things you want to do and being who you are and making the best of your life.”

Tenise Fernandez, 34,
cancer survivor

Taking care of yourself physically, spiritually, and emotionally is also important. Be sure that you and your caregivers have family and friends to encourage you and help you to follow your doctor's instructions. Cancer support groups, faith-based organizations, and other counselors can also help survivors. Ask your health care team for advice on how to find help or a support group that is right for you.

Seek support for everyday needs.

Anyone can have trouble getting through our health care system. Coping with treatment and side effects, clinical trials, and insurance adds stress to an already stressful time.

Many people find it hard to pay for screening, doctor's care, and treatment. Millions of Americans do not have health insurance. Many more do not have enough. Not having health insurance causes many Americans to put off seeing their doctors until after their disease has reached a stage when it is not as treatable.

There are ways to get help. Ask to be referred to a patient navigator, who is often a nurse or social worker. A patient navigator can give you advice, support, and assistance. A patient navigator can help set up your appointments or arrange transportation. A patient navigator can also help you find financial support.

Move forward with a **survivorship** care plan.

Life beyond cancer treatment can pose many challenges. Survivors need a written plan for how to continue to live a healthy life. Your written plan should include your treatment history, follow-up care, and recommended screenings. Financial problems, job loss, and fertility are issues for many survivors. Talk with your doctor or health care team to get help with these concerns.

Managing your **pain** can help quality of life.

Many cancer survivors need medical care for managing pain. This type of treatment is called *palliative care*. The goal of palliative care is to improve your quality of life. Ask your doctor about palliative care to deal with pain or discomfort because of your cancer treatments. For example, survivors sometimes use medication to relieve the nausea from chemotherapy.

Good palliative care gives you a chance to talk about physical and emotional concerns with your health care team and family. Cancer survivors' concerns may be about pain, sleep loss, what will happen in the future, and loss of independence. A social worker, counselor, or faith leader can help you and your family talk about these concerns.

Survivorship includes end-of-life **care**.

Everyone has the right to die with dignity and without pain. You have the right to decide what you do and do not want. Communicate your wishes in writing to your family and health care team.



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Cancer is not an ending. It's a circumstance and you get through it. You just don't let yourself think about anything except what you can do to help yourself be a survivor. It's been 7 years for me now.”

Mary Phillips, 76 years old,
7-year bladder cancer survivor



Hospice care is typically for the last 6 months of life. It can give you and your family the support you need. Hospice care is for patients of any age, religion, race, or illness. Hospice nurses, social workers, and doctors can help you control your pain and other symptoms so you are as comfortable as possible.

You can receive hospice care at home, in the hospital, or at a hospice facility. Medicare, Medicaid, and most private health insurance policies cover hospice care. However, many survivors do not know what it is or how they can get hospice care. If you want to learn more about hospice care, talk with your health care team.

As a nation, we must think about cancer in **new ways**.

We must understand cancer prevention and survivorship as individuals, as families, as communities, and as a united country. Each of us can make changes to our lifestyle to help prevent cancer. We can work with our doctors to catch cancer early. And as a nation, we can expand the ways we survive cancer and live beyond it. We can all work together to make our lives better.

This booklet is dedicated to all people who are seeking information and understanding about cancer prevention and survivorship.

www.NCTAcancer.org

Please let us know

How are cancer prevention and survivorship part of your life today?
How has this booklet inspired you to take action about cancer prevention and survivorship?

To answer, please visit **www.canyonranchinstitute.org/PeoplesStory**
or write to

Canyon Ranch Institute
Peoples' Story
8600 E. Rockcliff Road
Tucson, AZ 85750

This program is made possible by a joint collaboration between the Lance Armstrong Foundation, which seeks to inspire and empower people affected by cancer, and Canyon Ranch Institute, which helps to educate, inspire, and empower every person to prevent disease and embrace a life of wellness. For more information, visit **www.livestrong.org** and **www.canyonranchinstitute.org**.