


SPOT CANCER EARLY

**MANUAL FOR
MEN**

**REDUCE YOUR RISK
OF CANCER**



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Standard drinks images courtesy of the HSE.



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WARNING

This book is not about DIY

This book is for men

This book could seriously improve your health



Use this book to

Find out the things that increase your risk of cancer

Learn what you can do to reduce your risk of cancer

Understand the common cancers that affect men

BE YOUR OWN MAINTENANCE MAN

Adjust your lifestyle

4 in 10 cancers can be prevented by getting healthier and avoiding risk factors



Spot cancer early

Know the signs, check for changes in your body and get screening tests



Tell your doctor

Get checked out if you notice anything unusual or if you're worried



Cancer facts

1 IN 3

Lots of men get cancer

1 out of every 3 men in Ireland will get cancer.

Most cancers are more common in older people

The average age someone is diagnosed with cancer is 66.

66
AVERAGE AGE

✓ WALK DOG
✓ EAT WELL
✓ SUNCREAM

You can help to avoid cancer

You can cut your risk of cancer by making healthy lifestyle choices every day.

Lots of people get cured or live a long time with cancer

9 in every 10 men survive prostate and testicular cancers when they are caught early.



DO:

Get your cancer information from trusted sources.



DON'T:

Listen to myths, conspiracies or scare stories.

Any questions? Ask one of our cancer nurses. Call Freephone 1800 200 700 or email cancernurseline@irishcancer.ie

Cancer myths

Cancer is a death sentence

Treatments for cancer have never been better – spot most cancers early, and there's a good chance you will be cured or treatment will control the cancer for a long time.

Most cancers are inherited – there's nothing I can do

Very few cancers are inherited – only 2 or 3 in every 100 are linked to an inherited gene fault. Around 40 in every 100 can be prevented by a healthy lifestyle.

Red wine protects against cancer

A substance in red wine called resveratrol is being studied, but there is no evidence that it is effective in preventing or treating cancer in humans. And unfortunately, the alcohol in wine increases your risk of cancer.

Mobiles and laptops cause cancer

There's no reliable scientific evidence to prove that mobile phones, laptops or wifi cause cancer.

Eating organic food reduces your risk

The amount of pesticides on our food is very small. There's no evidence that pesticide-free organic food reduces your risk of cancer or that non-organic food increases cancer risk.



Don't leave cancer
to chance.
You can reduce
your risk.

! CAUTION: The things that put you at risk

- Smoking
- Being obese (very overweight)
- Physical inactivity
- Poor diet (too much red meat, fatty food, sugar and salt /not enough fruit, vegetables and fibre)
- Alcohol
- Too much exposure to the sun



Other risk factors

Workplace substances like

- Asbestos
- Formaldehyde

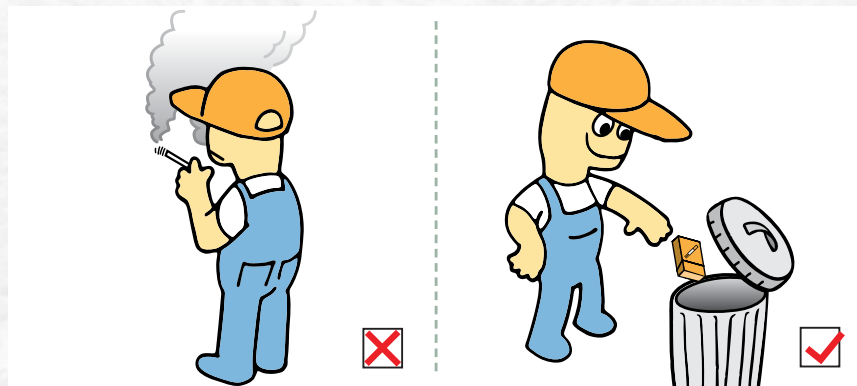
Always follow health and safety instructions.

Know about radon gas

Find out if radon levels are high in your area and what to do about them if they are. See www.radon.ie

Smoking: Quick guide

Smoking is a big risk for cancer, but it's a risk you can do something about.



Almost all lung cancer is caused by smoking.

Smoking causes at least 11 other types of cancer that affect men.

All types of smoking increase the risk – including roll-ups, pipes and cigars.

Even if you don't smoke, breathing in other people's smoke still increases your risk of lung and other cancers.

It's never too late to quit smoking, but the earlier you stop, the more you reduce your risk of cancer.

Giving up smoking doesn't just reduce your risk of cancer. It's the best thing you can do for your overall health.

One

day

at a

time!

How to... Quit smoking

1 Get ready to quit

Think about the reasons why you want to stop and what might make it hard. Pick a date when you're ready.

2 Get support

- Ask your family or friends to support you and not to smoke around you.
- Talk to your doctor for advice.
- Call the HSE Quit Team on Freephone 1800 201 203, visit www.quit.ie, or freetext QUIT to 50100.

3 Prepare for cravings

Withdrawal symptoms will disappear within a few weeks. Change your routine to avoid times and places when you will have a strong urge to smoke.

4 Take one day at a time

Every day without a cigarette is good news for your health, your family and your pocket.

5 Live well without smoking

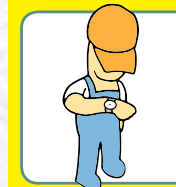
Take more exercise and eat well to feel even better. And enjoy the extra money in your pocket.



Cigarette smoke contains at least 69 chemicals that cause cancer.

Deal with cravings

Remember the 4 Ds:



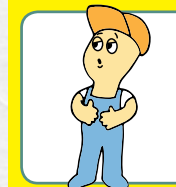
Delay at least 3 minutes and the urge will pass.



Drink a glass of water or fruit juice (sip slowly).



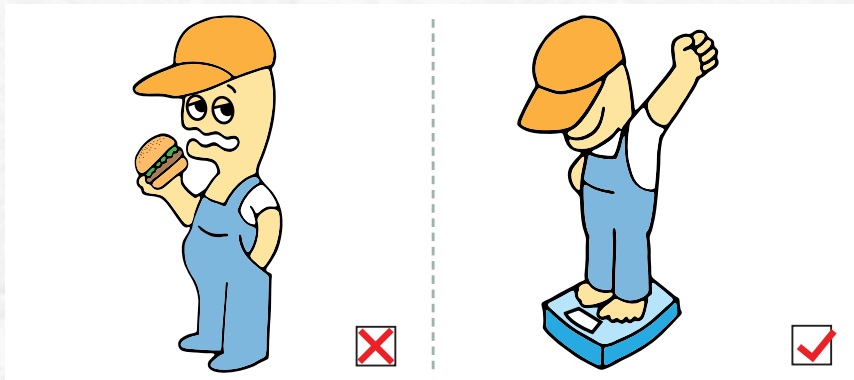
Distract yourself – move away from the situation.



Take a Deep breath – breathe slowly and deeply – to help you to relax.

⌚ Body weight: Quick guide

Getting to a healthy weight if you're overweight or obese could reduce your risk of 11 different cancers!



Are you a healthy weight?

Body mass index (BMI)

BMI is a number that tells if you are the right weight for your height. To find out your BMI you need to know your height and weight. Some pharmacies and shops have special scales that will measure it or you can use a website that will work it out for you.



Waist measurement

As a man, your risk is higher if your waist is more than 94 cm (37 inches). Measure with the tape just above your hip bone.

🔧 How to... Be a healthy weight


GOOD TO KNOW
You could lose half a kilo in a week if you cut 500 calories a day.

Eat breakfast

Get your metabolism going by eating breakfast. Then eat meals at regular times during the day to keep up your energy levels.

Don't overeat

Watch your portion sizes and try not to have second helpings.

Avoid liquid calories

Sugary fizzy drinks, fruit squashes and alcohol are high in sugar and calories.

Drink lots of water

Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day.

Never shop when you're hungry

Make a list so that you're not tempted by unhealthy treats.

Eat slowly

Enjoy the taste of your food and eat at a table if possible.

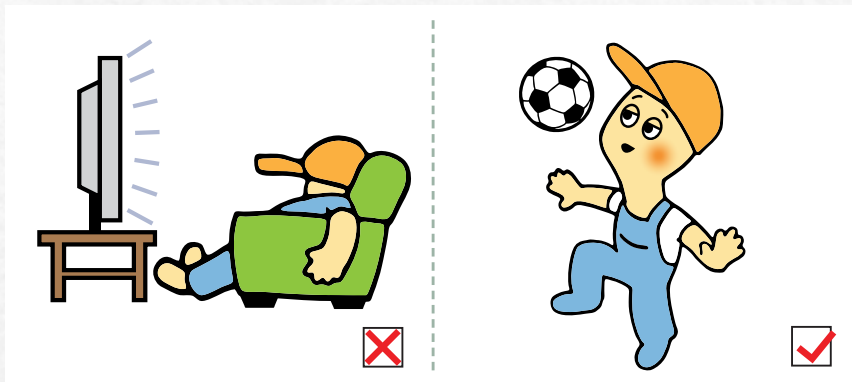
Take exercise

Regular exercise can speed up weight loss and make you feel great. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise or 10,000 steps a day.

Avoid high-calorie fatty and sugary foods

Go for low-fat or low-sugar options and pick healthy snacks like fruit.

Physical activity: Quick guide



Getting active could:

- Reduce your risk of at least 3 cancers
- Make you feel fitter and more energetic
- Boost your mood
- Improve your overall health, like heart health
- Help with other cancer risk factors, like being overweight.

Activity doesn't just mean exercise

Anything that makes you a bit warmer and slightly out of breath is good. Aim for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 or more days a week.

How to... Keep active

Start with what you can manage

If you're out of shape or unfit, start by walking or doing another gentle exercise.

Increase your level of activity as you get fitter

Set new goals to keep building your level of activity as you get fitter.

Stay safe

See your doctor for advice if you are very overweight or have medical problems.

Stand more, sit less

Avoid too much time sitting or lying down, for example, watching TV.

Be active in your everyday life

You don't have to join a gym:

- Walk or cycle instead of driving.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Play an active game with your kids.

Get fit with friends or family

Having company can make exercise more fun. Plus you can encourage each other if you're feeling lazy.



USEFUL TIP

Walk (or run!) as often
as you can

Park further away from where
you're going or get off the bus
early and walk instead.

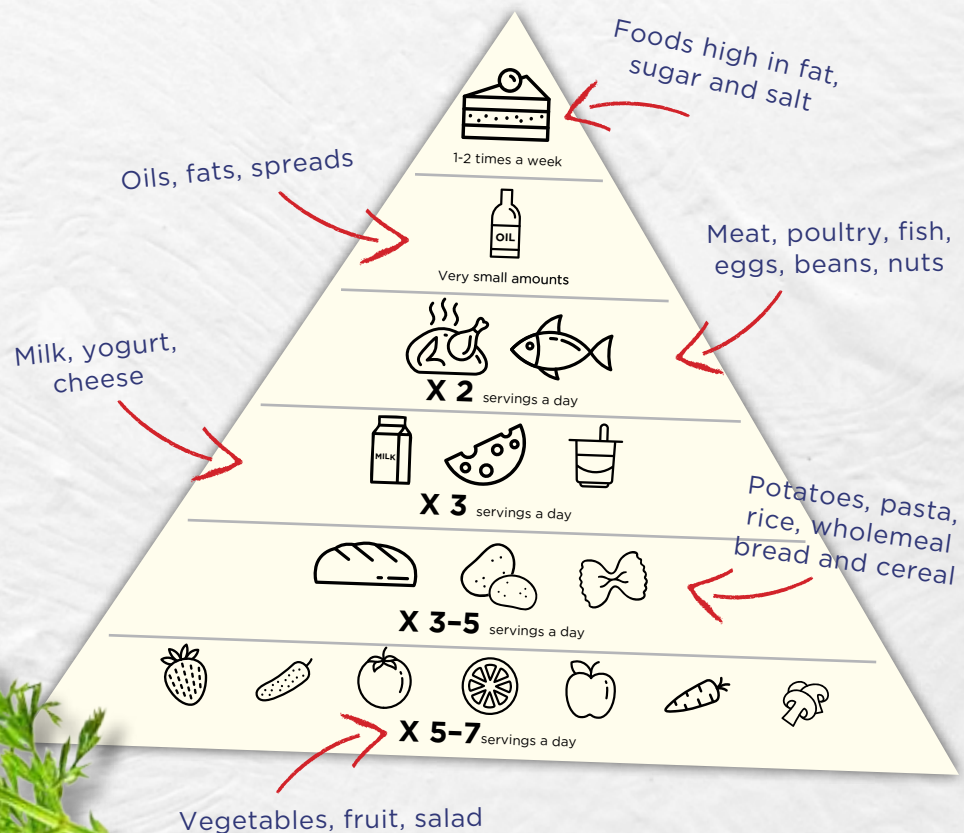


The more active you are, the better

If you can, try some more vigorous activity – the kind that leaves you out of breath. Try running, jogging or energetic (dad!) dancing.

🕒 Healthy eating: Quick guide

Healthy eating can help cut the risk of at least 6 cancers.



🔧 How to... Eat well



Pile your plate with veg

Fruit and vegetables

Eat 7 portions of fruit, vegetables and salad every day. Have some fruit at breakfast, add salad to your sandwiches and have more vegetables with your dinner.

Fill up on fibre

Go for high-fibre foods like wholegrain bread, fruit and vegetables, beans and lentils, brown rice, oats.

Limit red and processed meat

- Do not eat more than 500g of cooked lean red meat (800g raw meat) in a week.
- Limit or cut out processed meats like ham, rashers and salami.

Eat healthy, low-fat protein

Replace red meat with other protein like chicken, fish and beans.

Eat very little fat

- Avoid butter, oil, fatty meat and fried foods.
- Go for lean meat and low-fat options.
- Cook healthier by steaming, baking and grilling.

Avoid high-calorie foods

Cut down on fizzy drinks, fast food, sweets and cake.

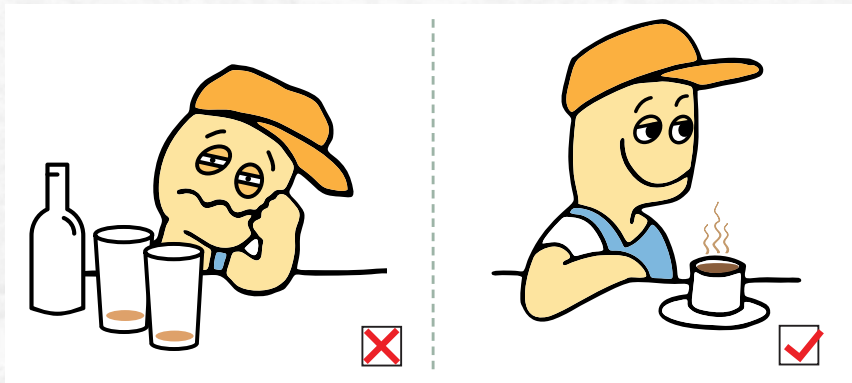
Eat less salt

- Try to avoid pre-packed and processed meals. Go for fresh ingredients that you cook yourself.
- Check the labels for salt (sodium) content – even foods like cornflakes can have salt added.
- Avoid adding salt when cooking or when eating your food.



⌚ Alcohol: Quick guide

Alcohol is a carcinogen – that means it can cause cancer.



Alcohol is a risk factor for:

- Mouth cancer
- Upper throat (pharynx) cancer
- Voice box (larynx) cancer
- Oesophageal (food pipe) cancer
- Bowel cancer
- Liver cancer

A standard drink is...



Half a pint
of stout,
lager, cider



A single pub
measure of
spirits



A small glass
of wine

🔧 How to... Reduce alcohol risk

Drink less

There is no safe amount of alcohol, but the less you drink, the lower your risk. Even 1 drink a day can increase your risk of some cancers.

Drink no more than **2 standard drinks** a day if you are a man, with 2 or 3 alcohol-free days.

Know how much you're drinking

Most people drink more than they think. Count your standard drinks for a week to find out. Remember, it's **how much** you drink that matters. All types of alcohol increase the risk of cancer.

Measure your drinks at home

It's easy to pour a double or a treble measure of spirits without realising, and a big wine glass can hold 2 or 3 standard drinks.

Drink some non-alcoholic drinks

Try switching to non-alcoholic drinks as the evening goes on. Or have a few glasses of water in between.

Dilute your alcohol

Use more mixer in your drink or go for low-alcohol beer or wines.

Try to quit smoking

If you drink and smoke, your risk of cancer is even higher. See page 9 for tips on quitting smoking.

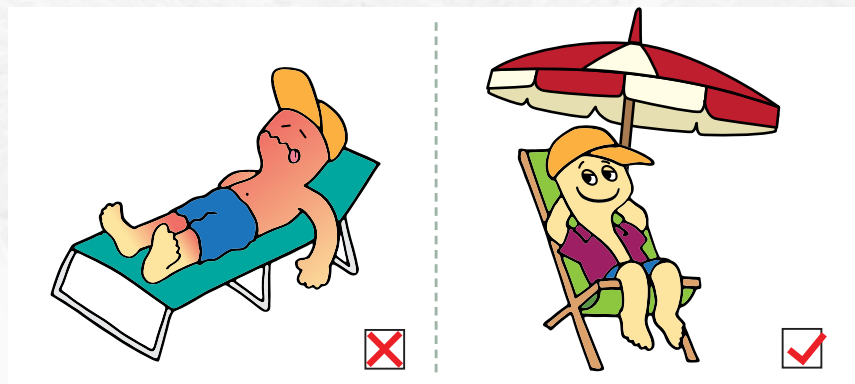


GOOD TO KNOW
Cutting back on alcohol can also improve your sleep, your mood and your energy levels.

🕒 Sun and UV rays: Quick guide

UV radiation from the sun's rays or sunbeds causes:

- Non-melanoma skin cancer (the most common kind)
- Melanoma skin cancer, which is more serious but not as common.



Even on **cloudy** Irish days up to **90%** of the sun's UV rays can reach your skin. Be extra careful if you spend a lot of time outdoors at work, playing sports or in your free time. Your skin may be exposed more than you realise.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland in men, but you can do a lot to prevent it.

Look for the UVA logo



Around six full teaspoons of sunscreen are needed to cover the body of an average adult.

🔧 How to... Keep safe in the sun

Skin cancer isn't just linked to sunburn – UV rays can still do damage, even on cool or cloudy days. Be SunSmart every day April to September, whatever the weather.



Levels of UVA from sunbeds can be over 10 times higher than the midday sun



The SunSmart Code

Stay in the shade, especially between 11 am and 3 pm.



Cover up – wear long shorts and a shirt with a collar.

Wear a hat – a big hat that covers ears, neck and nose!

Wear wraparound sunglasses to protect your eyes.



Use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) with UVA protection. Apply 20 minutes before going out in the sun and reapply every two hours.

How to... Spot cancer early

You're more likely to survive cancer if you spot it early.
But do you know what to look out for?

Unexplained changes

A lump or swelling

Check your whole body, not just your testicles.

Bleeding that is not normal for you

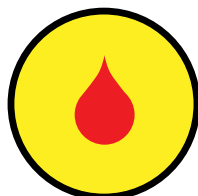
If you cough up blood or notice it in your pee or poo, see your doctor.

Weight loss

It is normal to see small weight changes over time. But a big weight loss, not related to dieting, may be a sign of something more serious.

Pain that does not go away

If you feel pain for more than four weeks that you cannot explain, talk to your doctor about it.



Persistent changes

A cough, changes in your voice or feeling short of breath

Speak to your doctor if you have any of these problems for more than three weeks, especially if you are a smoker or ex-smoker.

A sore that does not heal

If a spot, wart or sore does not heal in a few weeks, get it checked by your doctor, even if it is painless.

Bloating

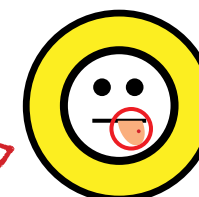
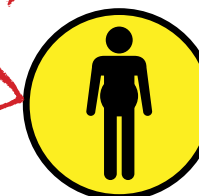
If bloating does not go away within a few weeks talk to your doctor about it.

Difficulty swallowing, indigestion or heartburn

It is not normal to have indigestion or heartburn that happens a lot or is very painful. Difficulty swallowing is not normal either. Get it checked by your doctor.

Mouth or tongue ulcer

Having a mouth or tongue ulcer for three weeks or more is not normal and needs to be checked by your doctor or dentist.



If you notice a change, the chances are it will not be cancer.
But getting it checked is not wasting anyone's time...

It could save your life!

How to... Spot cancer early

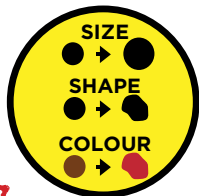
Unusual changes

A change in your bowel or bladder habits

If you have constipation, diarrhoea or problems passing urine for more than a few weeks, talk to your doctor.

A new mole or change to an existing mole

Get into the habit of checking your skin every month for new moles. Also watch for changes in colour, shape and size of existing moles.



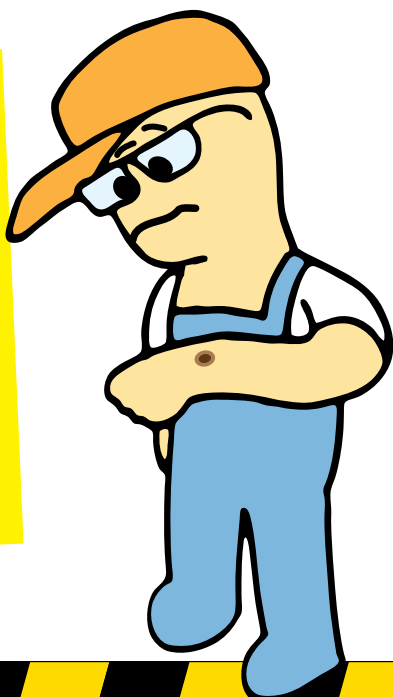
Check yourself

Check yourself regularly so that you're more likely to notice any changes.

Get screened

Screening means testing for cancer when you have no symptoms. Screening is a great way to spot cancer early and give yourself the best chance of getting cured.

Free screening for bowel cancer (BowelScreen) is available for men (and women) aged 60–69.



WORRIED? WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Don't ignore problems or warning signs

If you have any changes in your body that are unusual for you or you're worried, don't ignore it. Call your doctor and make an appointment, even if you feel OK. Most cancers can be successfully treated if they're caught early enough. Putting off going to the doctor could make cancer more difficult or even impossible to treat.

Don't worry

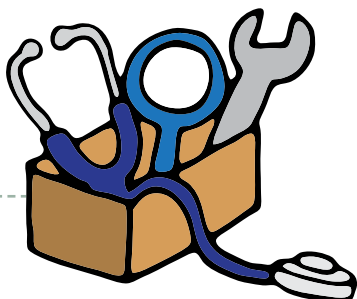
Remember, your doctor has seen it all before, and probably much worse! There's no need to be embarrassed.

Doctors won't do any tests or examinations without asking you first, and explaining what they are doing and why.

Blood tests or the prostate exam might be a bit uncomfortable, but you can handle it – it's better than letting cancer go undetected.



How to... Get a check-up



Be prepared

Your doctor will probably ask a lot of questions, so think about:

- Your family history
- Your medical history
- Your lifestyle
- Your general physical and mental health
- Any medication you're taking
- Any symptoms you have - when they started and how they feel
- If you have noticed anything else unusual (even if you think it's not important).

Speak out

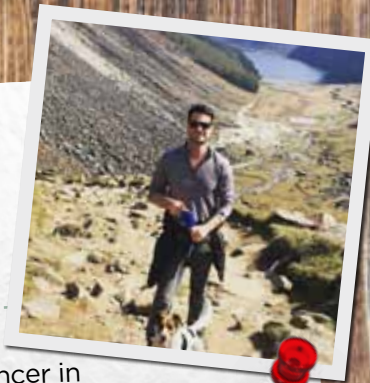
- Mention anything that's on your mind, even if the doctor doesn't ask. Be honest and give as much information as you can if the doctor asks you anything.

Ask questions

- Write a list of what you want to ask.
- Listen carefully and ask again if you don't understand.
- You can take someone along to your appointment to help you to remember your questions or what the doctor says.



I survived stage 3 bowel cancer



"I was diagnosed with stage 3 bowel cancer in 2013. I just couldn't believe it when I got the news. I had some abdominal pain but I really thought it was something minor - I had put it down to too much coffee!

What followed was a year of treatment and sickness and it was a huge challenge to beat the disease.

Thankfully I have come out the other side. But it is essential that we do more to raise awareness of this cancer and encourage people to go to their doctor if they are experiencing any of the symptoms.

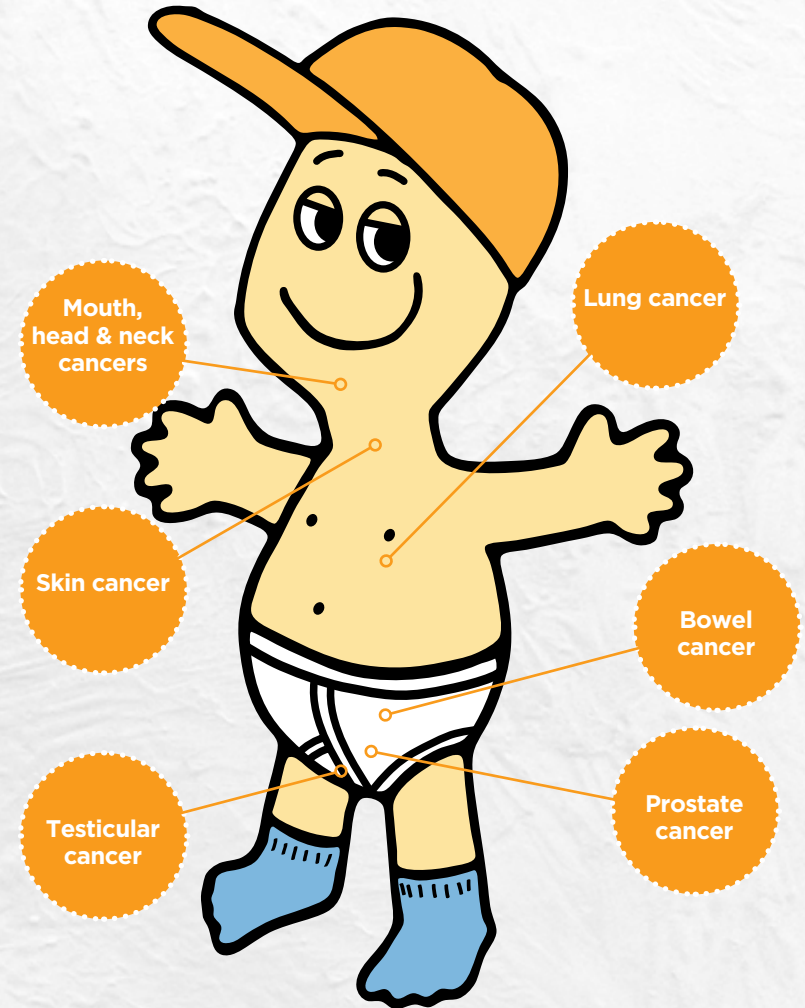
Bowel cancer is very treatable if caught early enough, I am living proof of that. But people must listen to their bodies and talk to their doctor as soon as possible about any symptoms they are having. Don't put it off."

Andrew Jones, 38, bowel cancer survivor, Dublin



User guide

Cancer types, signs and symptoms, prevention tips



Your guide to: Prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is Ireland's second most common cancer in men, after skin cancer. 1 in 7 Irish men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime.

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?

Warning signs:

- Difficulty passing urine
- Passing urine more often than usual, especially at night
- Needing to rush to the toilet
- Stopping and starting while passing urine, or a weak flow
- Feeling like you are not emptying your bladder fully
- Blood in your urine
- Pain when passing urine



Get the tools to reduce your prostate cancer risk

Be active in everyday life

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day. For more see page 12.

Be a healthy weight

As the amount of fat in the body increases, so does your chance of cancer. For more see page 10.

Have a healthy diet

Eat fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses. Limit foods high in sugar, salt and fat. Avoid processed meat and limit red meat. For more see page 14.

Get checked out

If you are over 50, you should see your doctor every year for a check-up. If you have a family history of prostate cancer you should have regular check-ups from the age of 40. A check-up should include the following tests:

- **Digital rectal examination.** Your doctor will put a gloved finger into your rectum (back passage) to see if the prostate gland is enlarged or abnormal.
- **PSA blood test.** This test measures the level of a substance called PSA (prostate specific antigen) in the blood. Men with prostate cancer can have a raised level of PSA.



Your risk of prostate cancer increases as you get older. Most men with the disease are over 50. If your brother or father has had prostate cancer, your risk is also higher.



Your guide to... Testicular cancer

Testicular cancer mainly affects younger men (15–34 years). Around 164 men are diagnosed every year in Ireland. Testicular cancer is very treatable and usually curable.

What are the symptoms of testicular cancer?

Warning signs:

- A painless lump or swelling in your testicle
- Pain, discomfort or heaviness in your testicle or scrotum
- Pain or a dull ache in your groin or tummy
- A change in the way your testicle feels

*Play with your balls -
doctor's orders!*

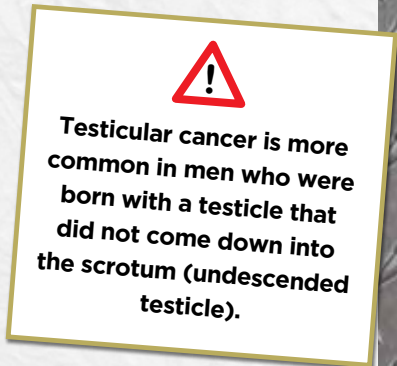


Get the tools to reduce your testicular cancer risk

Checking yourself at least once a month is the best way to avoid problems. Here's how:

- 1** Hold your scrotum in your hands.
- 2** Use the fingers and thumbs of both hands to examine your testicles.
- 3** Gently feel each testicle, one at a time, for any lumps or any change in size or weight.

It's common for one testicle to be slightly larger or hang lower than the other. The testicle itself should be smooth, with no lumps or swellings. It's normal to feel a soft tube at the top and back of the testicle. This is the sperm collecting tube (epididymis).





Your guide to... Bowel cancer

Bowel cancer is also known as colorectal cancer or cancer of the colon and rectum. Around 2,500 people in Ireland are diagnosed with bowel cancer each year.



What are the symptoms of bowel cancer?

Warning signs:

- A lasting change in your bowel habit - going more often, diarrhoea or constipation
- Blood in your poo or bleeding from your back passage (bottom)
- Pain or discomfort in your tummy area or back passage
- Trapped wind or fullness in your tummy
- A lump in your tummy area or rectum (back passage)
- Feeling you have not emptied your bowel fully after using the toilet
- Unexplained weight loss
- Feeling tired or breathless



GOOD TO KNOW
Bowel cancer can usually be treated successfully if it is found early.



Get the tools to reduce your bowel cancer risk



Have a healthy diet

Avoid processed meat and limit red meat. Eat fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses. Limit foods high in sugar, salt and fat. For more see page 14.



Be active in everyday life

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day. For more see page 12.



Be a healthy weight

As the amount of fat in the body increases, so does your chance of cancer. For more see page 10.



Avoid alcohol

Cutting back or avoiding alcohol will reduce your cancer risk. For more see page 16.



Don't smoke

Cut out the cigarettes and cut your cancer risk. For more see page 8.

Get screened

Testing for bowel cancer when you have no symptoms is called screening. The national bowel screening programme, BowelScreen, sends a free test kit to people aged 60–69 every two years. You send back a sample of your faeces (poo). The sample is tested for traces of blood.

If there is blood in your faeces it doesn't mean that you have cancer, but you may be advised to have more tests. For more information see www.bowelscreen.ie



Bowel cancer mainly affects people over the age of 50. If someone in your immediate family has had bowel cancer, your risk is also higher.

Your guide to... Lung cancer

In Ireland, lung cancer is the third most common cancer. Around 2,300 people are diagnosed with it every year. Smoking causes more than 9 out of 10 lung cancers.

What are the symptoms of lung cancer?

Warning signs:

- Difficulty breathing, or wheezing
- A cough that doesn't go away or a change in a long-term cough
- Repeated chest infections that won't go away, even after antibiotics
- Feeling more tired than usual
- A hoarse voice
- Coughing up blood-stained phlegm
- Pain in your chest, especially when you cough or breathe in
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Swelling around your face and neck
- Difficulty swallowing

Get the tools to reduce your lung cancer risk



Don't smoke

Cut out cigarettes and cut your cancer risk. For tips on quitting, see page 9.



Avoid second-hand smoke

Keep your home and workplace smoke-free. Second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer in non-smokers.



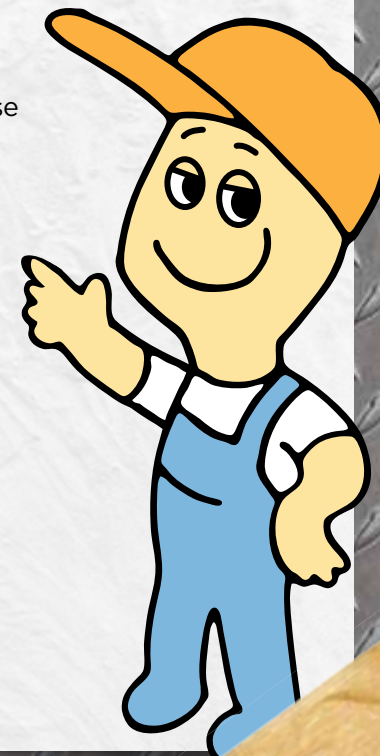
Protect yourself from chemicals and pollutants

Certain chemicals such as asbestos, metal dust, paints and diesel exhaust can increase your risk. Always follow health and safety instructions.



Check radon levels

Find out if you are exposed to radiation from naturally high radon levels in your home. Visit www.radon.ie



Your guide to... Mouth, head and neck cancers

Around 600 people are diagnosed with mouth, head and neck cancers in Ireland every year. These cancers are more common in men than in women.

What are the symptoms of mouth, head and neck cancers?

Warning signs:

- A sore or ulcer that does not heal within three weeks
- Difficulty or pain when chewing or swallowing
- A sore throat that won't go away
- Difficulty speaking, or having a hoarse voice
- An unexplained loose tooth
- A swelling or lump in the mouth or neck
- Pain in the face or jaw
- Earache, ringing in the ear or hearing problems
- Numbness of the tongue or face
- Blocked or bleeding nose
- Swelling around your face and neck
- Difficulty swallowing

The **earlier** these cancers are **diagnosed**, the greater the chance that **you will survive**.

Get the tools to reduce your risk



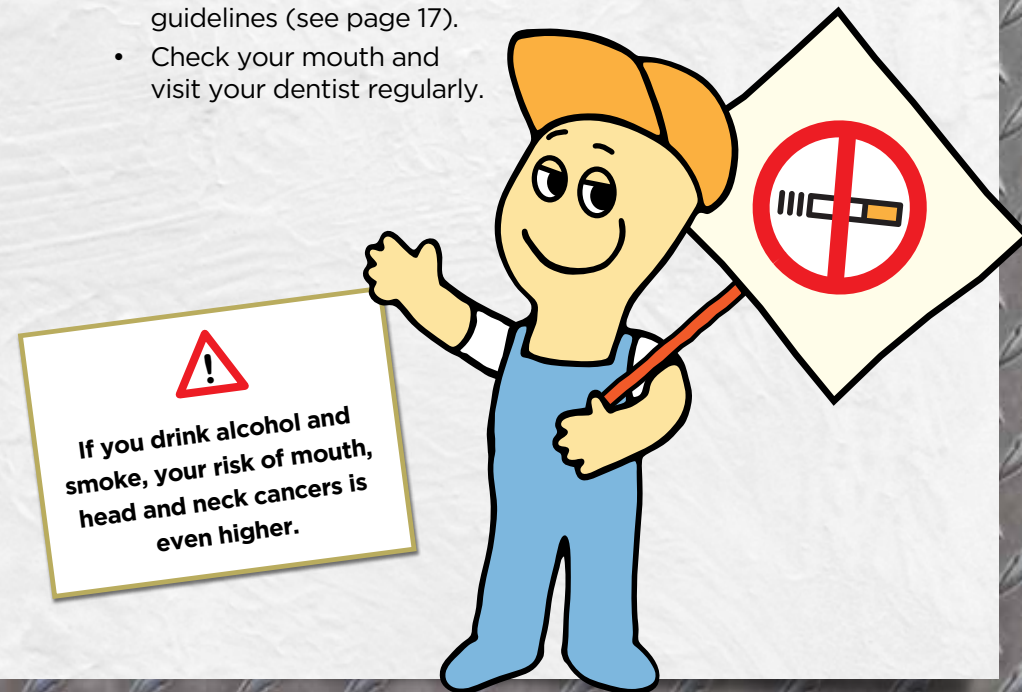
Don't smoke

By far the most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of mouth, head and neck cancers is to stop smoking. Your risk is increased by all types of tobacco, like:

- Cigarettes
- Pipes
- Cigars
- 'Roll-ups'
- Low-tar cigarettes

You should also:

- Stay within low-risk alcohol guidelines (see page 17).
- Check your mouth and visit your dentist regularly.



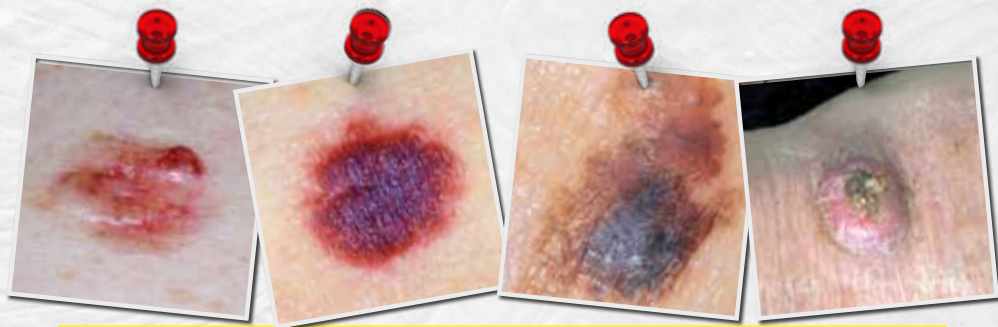
Your guide to... Skin cancer

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland. Around 9,000 people are diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer and 880 people are diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer.

What are the signs of skin cancer?

Watch out for:

- A change in the shape, size or colour of a mole
- A new growth or sore that does not heal in a few weeks
- A spot or sore that continues to itch hurt, crust, scab or bleed
- Constant skin ulcers that are not explained by other causes



Skin cancers don't all look the same. Go to the doctor if you're worried or notice any skin changes.

Get the tools to reduce your skin cancer risk

Use the SunSmart code

Protect your skin from excessive UV rays. See page 19 for the How-to guide.

Check your skin

Look for any skin changes or unusual moles.

Check your whole body once a month, including your feet, between your toes and under your arms. Use a hand mirror to check your scalp and the back of your body.

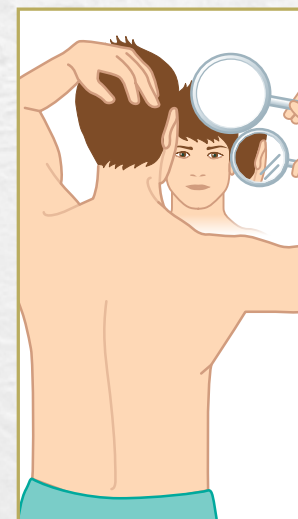
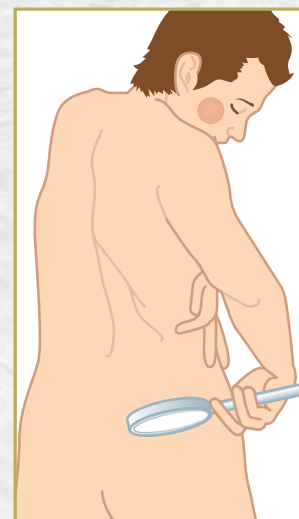


Your risk of skin cancer is higher if you have:

Pale or freckled skin which burns easily

Red or fair hair and blue, green or grey eyes

A lot of moles or unusual moles.





WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN?

Gene: Genes are coded messages within your body cells. They tell cells how to behave. They control how our bodies grow and develop.

Inherited faulty gene: These are faulty genes that are passed on from parent to child.

Obesity: Having too much body fat for your height.

PSA blood test: This test measures the level of a substance called PSA (prostate specific antigen) in the blood. Men with prostate cancer can have a raised level of PSA.

Radon gas: A natural gas that can pass from the soil into the foundations of buildings. Exposure to high levels of radon can increase the risk of getting lung cancer.

Rectum: The lower part of your bowel. Also called your back passage.

Risk factor: Anything that increases your chances of getting a disease.

Screening: Testing for a disease when you have no symptoms.

More about cancer

Call our Cancer Nurseline on **Freephone 1800 200 700** or email **cancernurseline@irishcancer.ie** for support, information and advice about anything cancer-related. You can also go to a Daffodil Centre or look at our website, **www.cancer.ie**

More about giving up smoking

For help with quitting, call the HSE Quit Team on **1800 201 203**, freetext QUIT to **50100** or go to **www.quit.ie**

More about getting active

Visit **www.getirelandactive.ie** for tips on how to get more active and information on clubs, groups and activities in your area.

More about healthy eating

Visit **safefood.eu** for meal plans, recipes and more information on healthy eating and weight loss.

More about alcohol

Call the HSE Alcohol Helpline on **1800 459 459** or visit **www.askaboutalcohol.ie**

WARNING

THIS BOOK COULD SERIOUSLY IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH.


'Any questions?'


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1800 200 700

Email: cancernurseline@irishcancer.ie

www.cancer.ie

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