

# Cancer



According to The American Cancer Society, more than 1.8 million people in the United States will be diagnosed with some form of cancer in their lifetime. Of that, more than 500,000 Americans die of cancer each year—making it the second-most common cause of death in the United States.

## What Is Cancer?

Cancer is used as a broad term to refer to diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control. There are over 100 types of cancer, and cancer cells can spread to all parts of the body through tumors, the blood and lymphatic systems.

## Types of Cancer

While there are over 100 kinds of cancer, some of the most common ones are:

- Carcinoma
- Sarcoma
- Leukemia
- Lymphoma
- Multiple myeloma
- Melanoma
- Brain and spinal cord tumors

## What Are the Risk Factors?

Unfortunately, you may not have control over some of the risk factors of developing cancer. That being said, having knowledge of possible risk factors can lead to prevention or early diagnosis. The most common risk factors include:

- **Age**—The median age for a cancer diagnosis is 66. The older you are, the higher your risk for cancer.
- **Unhealthy diet and obesity**—Eating a balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight may help lower your risk of cancer.

- **Environmental exposure and infectious agents**—External elements such as tobacco, chemicals, radiation and infectious organisms can increase your risk of cancer.
- **Alcohol**—Excessive alcohol consumption increases your risk for cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, esophagus, colon, rectum, liver and breasts.
- **Family history**—If a family member has been previously diagnosed with certain cancers, you may be at a higher risk of developing it yourself.

## How Can I Prevent Cancer?

Focusing on prevention may help lower the number of new cancer cases, reduce the financial and personal burden of cancer and lower the number of cancer-related deaths. Here are prevention strategies to consider:

- Be safe in the sun. Always apply sunscreen when you go outside, even if it's a cloudy day.
- Stay away from tobacco products.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Eat healthy and be active.
- Get screened. Having screening tests done throughout your lifetime can help detect breast, cervical, colon and lung cancers early.

## Where Can I Learn More?

Approximately 39.5% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer at some point during their life. Don't wait too long to talk to your doctor about risk factors, screening tests and other prevention tactics.