



Move your Body

About one-third of cancers are linked to lifestyle factors, such as a poor diet, smoking and lack of exercise. You can lower your risk of developing cancer by being physically active every day.

Physical inactivity and cancer risk

Physical inactivity is an important risk factor for bowel cancer and breast cancer, and possibly other types of cancer, such as prostate, uterine and lung cancer.

Being inactive contributes to weight gain. If you are overweight or obese, it increases your risk of developing cancer. Sedentary behaviour (sitting down a lot) is also associated with poorer health outcomes.

The good news is you can lower your cancer risk by being physically active.

Benefits of physical activity

Physical activity regulates hormones in the body, such as insulin-like growth factor and oestrogen, and affects the speed that food passes through the bowel. This is good for your body because it reduces contact with any potential carcinogens (cancer-causing substances).

Doing physical activity helps to maintain a healthy body weight. It can improve energy levels and feelings of wellbeing.

Being active is one of the best things you can do

To reduce your cancer risk, the more physically active you are the better. You can build up your fitness over time. As your level of fitness improves, aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity activity or 30 minutes of vigorous intensity activity every day.

Moderate physical activity requires some effort and includes any activity during which you can still hold a conversation, such as brisk walking, water aerobics, social tennis and dancing.

Vigorous physical activity makes you breathe harder, and it includes any activity that makes you 'huff and puff', such as fast swimming, lifting heavy weights, cycling and jogging.

Getting started

If you have not been physically active for some time, it is best to start slowly. Going too hard too early can cause pain and injury. Consult a health professional if you have concerns or questions.

Being active, like healthy eating, requires some effort and thought each day.

Tips for getting started

- Invite friends to join you for company and motivation.
- Plan ahead to fit exercise into your day.
- Set goals and challenge yourself to build up your physical activity levels.
- If you are active outdoors, remember to be SunSmart.
- Drink water before, during and after your activity.

Tips for home

- Turn off the TV, computer or electronic device and use the time to be active.
- Walk or cycle to the local shops.
- Do gardening or housework.
- Be active as a family.
- Walk your children or grandchildren to school.

Tips for work

- Catch public transport to work, get off a stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
- Park your car 10–15 minutes from work and walk the rest of the way.
- Walk with colleagues at lunchtime or during breaks.
- Take the stairs, not the lift.
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

Once you introduce physical activity into your routine, you will discover what you enjoy. It's important to try to stay physically active over your lifetime.

Where can I get reliable information?

- **Cancer Council NSW 13 11 20.** Information and support for you and your family for the cost of a local call anywhere in Australia. www.cancercouncil.com.au
- **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) 13 14 50**