

How to Reduce Your Risk of Getting a Second Cancer

For patients and families

The idea of getting a second cancer is very hard to imagine when you have already received a cancer diagnosis. But, there are ways you can help to lower your chance of getting a second cancer.

Read this pamphlet to learn more.



What is a second cancer?

A second cancer is a cancer that is different from your first cancer.

It is found after treatment for your first cancer is finished. While the chance of getting a second cancer is very low, you may have a higher chance of developing cancer as a cancer survivor.

There are risk factors that you have no control over such as:

- age
- family history
- genetics

There are other things you can control in your daily life. Almost half of all cancer cases can be prevented by living a healthy lifestyle. Eating well and keeping a healthy body weight are important ways to help reduce your cancer risk.

How can I help reduce my cancer risk?

- **Don't smoke**
Do not smoke or chew tobacco and avoid second-hand smoke.
- **Eat healthy**
Make sure to eat lots of fruits, veggies and fibre and less fat and sugar. Talk to your health care team about a healthy eating plan.
- **Exercise**
If you have not been very active, don't be afraid to start slowly and aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity each day to help reduce your cancer risk.

- **Limit how much alcohol you drink**

If you drink alcohol, you can reduce your risk by keeping it to:

- 1 drink a day or less for women
- 2 drinks a day or less for men

- **Be sun safe**

Whenever you are out in the sun remember to:

- cover up
- wear sunglasses
- use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher

Also, do not use tanning beds and sun lamps. These are not 'safe' ways of tanning and can increase your cancer risk.

- **Know your body**

As a cancer survivor you may be aware of some of the signs and symptoms of cancer. It is important that you know what is normal for yourself. If you notice any changes, talk to your health care team.

- **Get screened regularly**

Cancer screening looks for cancer before you have any signs or symptoms. You have a better chance of beating cancer by finding it early. Talk to your doctor about what screening options are best for you.

Remember, talk to your doctor about what you can do to improve and keep track your health.

For more information

For more information on second cancers and what you can do to prevent them, visit the following links:

- Canadian Cancer Society: Click on "Prevention" at www.cancer.ca
- LIVESTRONG: Search "Second Cancers" and "Care Plan" at www.livestrong.org

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information. Contact us to provide feedback or request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats: pfep@uhn.ca

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