



Understanding cancer prevention

For information and support, call **13 11 20**



Contents

Being smoke-free	4
Quitting smoking or vaping	4
How about vapes?	4
Help quitting cigarettes or e-cigarettes	5
Healthier habits	5
Clean air for everyone	5
Protect your skin	6
Think UV, not heat	7
SunSmart checklist	7
Finding skin cancer early	8
Individual skin cancer risk	8
Get to know your skin	9
How to find cancer early	10
What is a cancer screening test?	10
Bowel cancer screening	10
Breast cancer screening	11
Cervical cancer screening	12

Immunisation	13
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	13
Hepatitis B	13
Healthy eating	14
Healthy meal ideas across the day	15
Weight and links to cancer	15
Sugary drinks	16
Are diet drinks a good alternative?	16
Avoid or limit alcohol	17
Physical activity	18

Being smoke-free

Quitting smoking or vaping

If you smoke or vape, quitting is the best thing you can do to reduce the risk of developing cancer and to improve your health in general. The benefits of going smoke-free are greatest when doing so early, but it is never too late to start reversing the harmful health effects of smoking. Even people living with cancer can see major improvements after quitting. Cancer treatment is much more effective, there is less risk of cancer relapse, and less risk of getting new cancers.

Going smoke-free means within:

20 minutes

You already have less risk of a heart attack.

24 hours

Oxygen levels in your blood increase significantly, meaning muscles, heart and other vital organs can work more easily.

1 week

You will have already saved lots of money, as much as \$350 for a pack a day smoker.

1 month

Your immune system will have improved; it can be better at detecting and removing cancer cells.

3 months

Your lung's natural cleaning system is restored and can better protect you from lung disease.

5-15 years

Your risk of stroke and cancers of the lung, mouth, throat, and oesophagus (food pipe) significantly decreases.

What about vapes?

E-cigarettes, also known as vapes, are harmful. E-cigarettes can contain over 200 chemicals including some that cause cancer. This includes formaldehyde and acrolein, used in embalming fluid and weed killer. E-cigarettes are not a proven tool to quit smoking. E-cigarettes often have very high levels of nicotine, even if labelled as 'nicotine-free'.

Studies are showing an increase in vaping by young people. Talk to your children about the harms of vaping. You can call Quitline (13 7848) for advice on how to support them to quit.

Help quitting cigarettes or e-cigarettes

Quitting cigarettes or e-cigarettes can be challenging. However, getting some expert tips from Quitline (13 7848), your GP, or pharmacist can really make a difference. You might choose to use nicotine replacement products such as nicotine patches, lozenges, or gum. There are also prescription medications available that work by blocking nicotine cravings.

Healthier habits

Be mindful that smoking and vaping can also be strongly tied to habits and emotions. It can be helpful to list what habits or emotions (triggers) make you want to smoke or vape and come up with replacement strategies that are just right for you. Quitline can help you identify these strategies too.

Listing your triggers and preparing strategies to manage them can really help. Here are a few suggestions:

If your trigger occurs...	First thing in the morning	Try getting in the shower straight away.
	When having your morning coffee or tea	Change your drink to something else e.g. herbal tea, or drink it in a different room you don't associate with smoking or vaping.
	When socialising	Let people you're with know you've quit and ask them not to offer you cigarettes or vapes.
	When you're stressed	Remove yourself from the situation or talk with a friend.

Clean air for everyone

Cigarette smoke can remain in the air for hours and can linger on hard or soft materials for months. Research has also found that second-hand smoking and vaping can affect your breathing and the breathing of those around you. Smoke-free and vape-free cars, homes, and public spaces help create healthier environments for everyone.

For more information visit quit.org.au

Protect your skin

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is both the major cause of skin cancer and the best natural source of vitamin D. In Australia, we need to balance the risk of skin cancer from too much sun exposure with maintaining vitamin D levels.

A UV level of 3 is high enough to cause damage to unprotected skin and eyes. Sun protection when the UV is 3 and above does not put people at risk of vitamin D deficiency.

If you are concerned about your vitamin D requirements speak to your GP.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with over **950,000** cases treated every year.



Exposure to UV radiation in the first **18** years of life and a history of sunburns contributes to individual skin cancer risk.



Skin damage from UV radiation **adds up** over time causing permanent damage to our skin.



At least **2 in 3** Australians will be diagnosed with some form of skin cancer in their lifetime.



The good news is that skin cancer is preventable, and sun protection at any age can reduce overall risk.

Protect yourself in five ways when the UV is 3 and above. Download the free SunSmart Global UV app to find daily sun protection times for your location.



SLIP



SLOP



SLAP



SEEK



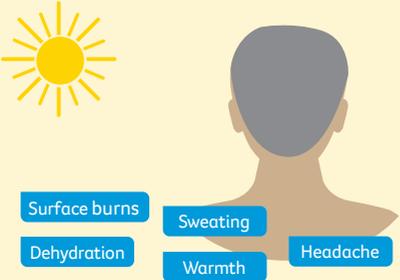
SLIDE

Think UV, not heat

UV from the sun cannot be seen like sunlight or felt like the sun's warmth (heat), so it can be damaging without us even knowing. UV can still be at damaging levels on cool or cloudy days so we can't rely on the weather or our senses to decide when to protect ourselves. Heat and UV affect our bodies differently.

Infrared Radiation - Heat

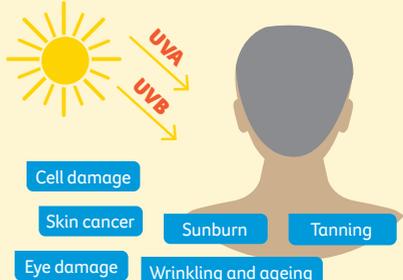
We can feel heat on our skin.



- Surface burns
- Sweating
- Dehydration
- Warmth
- Headache

Ultraviolet Radiation - UV

Our senses can not detect UV.



- Cell damage
- Skin cancer
- Sunburn
- Tanning
- Eye damage
- Wrinkling and ageing

SunSmart checklist

Protecting ourselves is an easy way to reduce skin cancer risk.

Be SunSmart when the UV is 3 and above:

- Slip on sun protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Slap on an SPF50+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before heading outside and reapply every two hours to maintain protection.
- Slap on a shady hat with a wide brim that protects your face, ears and back of the neck.
- Seek shade as much as possible when outdoors.
- Slide on close-fitting, wrap-around sunglasses.



Download the free SunSmart Global UV app

Finding skin cancer early

Individual skin cancer risk

Each person's skin cancer risk is different.

Individual risk is influenced by a number of factors:

- Your skin type – the fairer your skin, the greater the risk.
- The number of moles you have.
- Your amount of UV exposure over your lifetime (particularly if you are an outdoor worker).
- Your personal history of skin damage (including childhood sunburns).
- Your family history of skin cancer.



Everyone who spends a lot of time exposed to the sun in Australia, particularly those who work outdoors, are at risk of skin damage and therefore skin cancer.

Get to know your skin

Thankfully, most skin cancers can be treated if found early.

- Become familiar with your skin and check it regularly.
- Undress in good lighting, check your whole body from head to toe, using a mirror.
- If possible, ask someone you trust to help with any hard to see spots.
- Use the ABCDE melanoma guide to check your spots.
- See your GP if you notice any changes.

Get to know your skin

CHECK FROM TOP TO TOE



UNDRESS IN GOOD LIGHT AND CHECK FROM HEAD TO TOE USING A MIRROR, OR ASK SOMEONE YOU TRUST TO HELP WITH ANY HARD TO SEE SPOTS.



USE THE **ABCDE** MELANOMA GUIDE TO CHECK YOUR SPOTS.

A ASYMMETRY



B BORDER



C COLOUR



D DIAMETER



E EVOLVING



SOMETHING CHANGED?
VISIT YOUR GP NOW!

Check your skin regularly. Keep an eye out for:

- a new spot
- a spot that changes in colour, size, or shape
- a spot that looks or feels different to others
- a spot that is itchy or bleeds
- a sore that doesn't heal.

ABCDE of melanoma



Images A-D courtesy of Cancer Council Australia/ Image E courtesy of University of Sydney

For more information visit sunsmart.org.au

How to find cancer early

What is a cancer screening test?

Cancer screening tests can find early signs of cancer. The tests can also find changes to cells or infections in your body that may cause cancer in the future. The Australian Government offers three national cancer screening programs to find early signs of bowel, breast, and cervical cancer. If cancer is found at an early stage, the chances of surviving are higher. The cancer screening programs are free if you have a green Medicare card. If you do not have a green Medicare card, talk to your GP about how much the tests will cost.

Bowel cancer screening



Bowel cancer screening involves completing an at-home bowel screening test. The test looks for blood in your faeces (poo) that cannot be seen. If blood is found, you may need further testing to find the cause of the blood. Every two years the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program will post a free test kit to all Australians aged 50-74 years.

We recommend:

- Participating in bowel cancer screening every two years if you are aged 50 to 74 years. Complete and return your test kit when it arrives in the post from the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can also ask for a free kit from their GP.
- Seeing your GP if you have symptoms at any age. Symptoms include bleeding from your rectum, seeing blood in the toilet or on the toilet paper after emptying your bowels, or unexplained constipation or diarrhoea.
- Seeing your GP if you have a family history of bowel cancer.

For more information visit ncsr.gov.au/information-for-participants or call 1800 627 701.

Breast cancer screening



A breast screen is an X-ray of the breasts. Having a regular breast screen can find breast cancer early, often before you can feel it, when it is small and easy to treat. A breast screen is currently the best test available to find breast cancer in women who do not have symptoms.

We recommend:

- Having a free breast screen every two years with BreastScreen SA if you are aged 50 to 74 years. If you are aged 40-49 or 75 and older you can also have a free breast screen with BreastScreen SA.
- Checking your breasts regularly for any changes, even if you are younger than 50 years or are having regular breast screens.
- Seeing your GP as soon as possible if you notice any changes to your breasts. Changes include a lump in your breast or a change in the size or shape of your breasts.
- Seeing your GP if you have a family history of breast cancer.

To book your free breast screen visit breastscreen.sa.gov.au or call 13 20 50.

Cervical cancer screening



A Cervical Screening Test checks the health of the cervix. Regular cervical screening is the best way to prevent cervical cancer. Anyone who is eligible for a Cervical Screening Test can choose between collecting the sample themselves using a long-handled swab (called self-collection), or having a sample collected by a GP or nurse using a speculum.

Both options are equally safe and effective. Talk to your GP or nurse about which option is right for you.

We recommend:

- All women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 74 who have ever had any sexual contact, have a Cervical Screening Test every five years.
- Being vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes almost all cases of cervical cancer.
- Seeing your GP if you have any symptoms such as unusual bleeding or pain during sex.

If you need support after being diagnosed with cancer, call Cancer Council SA on 13 11 20.

Immunisation

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

Immunisation against certain types of HPV, and regular cervical screening, is the best protection against cervical cancer. Immunisation also protects against some cancers of the throat and genitals, and genital warts. The free HPV vaccine is offered to all Australian children aged 12-13 through the school-based National Immunisation Program, or it can be accessed up until the age of 25 through a GP clinic, pharmacy, or local immunisation clinic.

The HPV vaccine protects against:

Most
cervical cancers

95%
of all male
HPV-related cancers

90%
of genital warts

For more information visit hpvvaccine.org.au

Hepatitis B

Chronic infection with hepatitis B is the biggest known risk factor for developing liver cancer. The most effective protection against hepatitis B is immunisation. In Australia all babies are offered a free course of the hepatitis B vaccine shortly after birth as part of the National Immunisation Program.

If you are not immunised against hepatitis B speak with your GP about testing and immunisation.

Healthy eating

Eating patterns based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines will give you energy for everyday life, and while there is no one food on its own that can protect against cancer, a healthy diet overall can help reduce the risk of some cancers.

Dietary recommendations

Cancer Council SA supports the Australian Dietary Guidelines which recommend:



Eat plenty

- Eating at least two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables, including legumes (beans, peas and lentils), daily.
- Eating at least four serves of wholegrain or wholemeal foods every day.
- Eating two to three serves of nuts or seeds (no added salt) every day.
- Eating fish (preferably oily types) at least twice per week.

Limit or avoid

- Moderate consumption of lean red meat. This means a palm-sized portion served up to three or four times a week (no more than 455g cooked/700g raw per week).
- Limit or avoid processed meats such as frankfurts, salami, bacon and ham.
- Limit consumption of burnt or charred meat.
- Limit consumption of junk foods such as biscuits, confectionery, sugary drinks and alcohol.

Aim for a variety of fruit and veggies, which can be fresh, tinned, frozen or dried – it all counts.

Choose a variety of wholegrain foods, such as wholegrain bread and pasta, wholegrain breakfast cereal or muesli, brown rice, oats and quinoa.

If you have a specific health condition, would like further information or individual advice, please seek, or continue to follow the advice of your GP or Accredited Practising Dietitian.

Healthy meal ideas across the day

BREAKFAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choose wholemeal or wholegrain breads and cereals • top cereals with fruit • top grainy toast with nutritious spreads eg. eggs, tomato, avocado, peanut butter or baked beans 			
LUNCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choose wholemeal or wholegrain bread or crackers • include salad or vegetables 			
DINNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include plenty of vegetables • choose lean meats or meat alternatives, trim visible fat, remove chicken skin • choose high fibre grain foods 			
SNACKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choose a variety from the five food groups (e.g. fruit, vegetables, grainy crackers, low fat cheese and yoghurt, nuts and seeds) 			
LIMIT OR AVOID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foods high in fat, sugar or salt • sugary drinks • alcohol 			



Looking for healthy recipes?

Weight and links to cancer

Excess body fat (especially fat around the waist and organs) can increase the release of harmful chemicals and hormones into the body, which can increase cancer risk. However, not everyone living in a larger body is unhealthy, and not everyone living in a smaller body is healthy.

The causes of weight gain are complex and can be out of the control of individuals. These include limited access to healthy foods, and spaces that allow for physical activity, medications that cause weight gain and marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks by the processed food industry.

However, eating more nutritious foods, eating less junk foods and increasing physical activity will reduce overall risk, regardless of a person's body weight, and regardless of whether they lead to weight loss.

Sugary drinks

Sugary drinks are high in energy (kilojoules) and provide no other essential nutrients. Regular consumption may lead to weight gain and obesity, which can increase the risk of health problems, including tooth decay, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

What are sugary drinks?

- soft drinks/soda (excluding diet or artificially sweetened varieties)
- sweetened flavoured mineral water or sweetened vitamin water
- sports drinks
- energy drinks
- sugar sweetened teas
- fruit and vegetable drinks
- cordial.

Are diet drinks a good alternative?



Diet or artificially sweetened drinks may not contain the same amount of energy (kilojoules) as sugar-sweetened versions but are highly acidic and can lead to tooth decay. Cancer Council SA recommends drinking tap water or low-fat milk. Water is the best option for hydration and low-fat milk provides important nutrients such as calcium and protein, which supports healthy bones and teeth.

Choose water or low-fat milk over sugary and sugar-free drinks.

Avoid or limit alcohol

Cancer Council SA recommends to avoid or limit drinking alcohol.

If you choose to drink alcohol, the advice is no more than **10** standard drinks **per week** and no more than **4** standard drinks **on any one day**.

No more than 10 standard drinks per week.



No more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.



A standard drink:



Light beer
425 ml | 2.7% alc/vol



Mid strength beer
375 ml | 3.5% alc/vol



Full strength beer
285 ml | 4.9% alc/vol



Regular cider
285 ml | 4.9% alc/vol



Sparkling wine
100 ml | 13% alc/vol



Wine
100 ml | 13% alc/vol



Fortified wine
(eg. sherry, port)
60 ml | 20% alc/vol



Spirits
(eg. vodka, gin, rum, whiskey)
30 ml | 40% alc/vol

Information adapted from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian Alcohol Guidelines (revised).

Any amount of alcohol can increase the risk of cancer, regardless whether it is beer, wine or spirit.

Physical activity

Being physically active is good for our body and mind and can help prevent cancer.

When we are active, our body produces chemical reactions that are protective against cancer, particularly if it is for longer periods of time, and at higher intensities.

Adults should be active most days, preferably every day.

Each week, aim for:

2.5 to 5 hours of moderate intensity physical activity

– such as a brisk walk, golf, mowing the lawn or swimming.

Or

1.25 to 2.5 hours of vigorous intensity physical activity

– such as jogging, aerobics, fast cycling, soccer, or netball.

Or

An equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous activities.



Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you do no physical activity right now, start by doing some, then slowly build up to the recommended amount. Some people might need to speak to their GP before commencing new physical activities.



For free and confidential information and support about cancer:

- call Cancer Council **13 11 20**
- email askanurse@cancersa.org.au

Free interpreting service is available on **13 14 50**