

Reduce Your Cancer Risk Factors

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Four out of 10 cancer diagnoses and half of cancer deaths of adults 30 and older in the United States are linked to modifiable risk factors, according to a new study by the American Cancer Society.

Such factors include cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, excess body weight, lack of physical activity, consumption of red meat, exposure to ultraviolet radiation and infection with human papillomavirus (HPV) or hepatitis B.

Researchers found that smoking played an outsized role, contributing to 56% of all potentially preventable cancers in men (206,550 out of 368,600 cases) and 40% in women (137,520 of 344,740). Similarly, 100% of cervical cancer cases were linked to modifiable risk factors (in this case, HPV, which can be prevented with a vaccine).

In a study by the World Health Organization (WHO), data from 2022 showed that 31% of adults worldwide didn't get the recommended daily amount of physical activity. This is a 5% increase from 2010. The WHO recommends that adults exercise at moderate intensity for 150 minutes or at vigorous intensity for 75 minutes per week. A lack of physical activity is linked to a greater risk for cancers—notably breast and colon cancer—as well as type 2 diabetes, dementia and cardiovascular events such as strokes and heart attacks.
