

Driving and your health - Think about it!



Fact Sheet No.10: The Big 'C' Cancer prevention



1. The Big 'C' - What is Cancer?

Cancer takes many forms but generally involves uncontrolled cell growth - the cancer cells invade healthy tissues so that those tissues are unable to function properly.


If left untreated, cancer cells can spread from where they first started to other parts of the body.


Improved treatments and methods of early detection mean that many people overcome cancer. The most common forms of cancer are skin cancer, bowel cancer, breast cancer and prostate cancer.

1 in 3 Australians will develop cancer during their lifetime. The majority of cancers effect people in their 50s and onwards.

2. What can you do to prevent cancer?

Many cancers are lifestyle-related so there's a lot you can do to reduce your risk

 **Avoid smoking.** This is important as smoking is linked to about 30% of cancer cases. If you currently smoke, try and quit. If you need help, contact the QUIT line on 131 848.

 **Make healthy food choices** (see Fact Sheet 6, *Healthy Food Choices*). Eating more fruit and vegetables and less

processed and fatty meats (eg. sausages) will significantly reduce your chances of developing cancer.



Be active every day (see Fact Sheet 7, *Be Active Every Day*). Getting some regular moderate exercise and maintaining a healthy body weight will also reduce your risk.



Protect yourself from the sun's damaging rays. Wear a long-sleeved, close-weaved shirt, put on the sunnies and a broad-brimmed hat when exposed to the sun and apply sunscreen regularly. Keep sunscreen in your glove box.



Moderate your alcohol intake. Aim for 2 standard glasses or less per day, and 2 alcohol free days per week. Alcohol is an important risk factor for cancers of the digestive tract, liver and breast.

These changes to your lifestyle will not only reduce your cancer risk but will also help protect you from heart diseases, diabetes and other lifestyle-related diseases.

3. How does cancer affect driving?

The effect of cancer on driving depends on the type of cancer.

Cancer treatment may affect your ability to drive because of the side effects such as *fatigue, nausea and inability to concentrate* for extended periods of time.

Speak to your doctor who will be able to assess your ability to drive. It may be that you can come to some agreement with your employer to reduce your hours, duties or workload.

You can still hold a commercial drivers licence if your doctor and/or specialist says that you are likely to remain stable and have normal physical and mental abilities.

4. Early detection could save you a lot of trouble!

Early detection of cancer is important as most cancers can be treated more successfully if diagnosed in the early stages. This doesn't mean panicking at the slightest lump or bump – it does mean:



Being aware of your body and what to look for, and speaking to your doctor if you have any concerns:

- ***Look out for changes in your skin***, especially as you get old and particularly in areas that have been exposed to the sun, such as your back, shoulders, face, neck, hands and forearms (driver's arm!).
- ***See your doctor if you develop a lump in your testicles***. Unlike most other cancers testicular cancer is more common in young men.

- ***Be aware of possible symptoms of lung cancer*** - persistent cough, breathlessness, pains in the chest, and recurring pneumonia or bronchitis.

- ***Keep an eye on your bowel movements***. Blood in the faeces can be a sign of bowel cancer.



Taking advantage of the routine medical tests (screening) to detect cancer at an early stage.

- Ask your doctor to check your skin on a regular basis.
- If you are over 50 or have a family history of bowel cancer, ask your doctor about a screening test.
- Women should consider breast cancer and cervical cancer screening.



Being aware of circumstances such as your family history which may increase your risk.

- Talk to your doctor about your family history of cancer – there may be special precautions you can take to reduce your risk.

5. For more information

Contact:

- Your local doctor.
- The Cancer Helpline: 13 11 20 www.cancer.org.au.
- QUIT Helpline: 13 18 48 www.quit.org.au



For more information see www.ntc.gov.au

Looking after your health is like looking after your vehicle - regular care and maintenance pays off in the long run

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