



President Obama proclaimed April as National Cancer Control Month. Cancer is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S. It is projected that over a million people will be diagnosed with cancer this year. One of the goals of cancer control is to reduce the risks that cause cancer. Risk factors increase your chance of getting cancer, but that doesn't mean you will get cancer. It's important for you to understand and identify your cancer risk factors:

1. Cancer doesn't discriminate. It affects people of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some groups are at higher risks for certain cancers: African American men have the highest rate of prostate cancer; African American men and women have the highest rates of colorectal cancer. Asian Americans have the highest rate of liver cancer and Hispanic women have the highest rate of cervical cancer.
2. There is no healthy tobacco. Tobacco in any form (cigarettes, cigars, pipe, e-cigs and chewing tobacco) is a risk for multiple cancers. Exposure to second hand smoke is also a risk factor for lung cancer, even in people who have never smoked.
3. Drinking alcohol (frequently, heavily or bingeing) increases your risk of cancers of the liver, breast, esophagus, colon and throat.
4. Obesity, a condition in which you have a high percentage of body fat and weight, increases your risk of many cancers including endometrial, breast, colon, kidney, gallbladder, and liver cancer.
5. Diets low in fruits and vegetables and high in processed foods, red meats and charred meats increase your risk of many cancers such as colorectal cancer.
6. Lack of activity increases your risk of getting many types of cancer. Inactivity occurs not only with minimal or no exercise but also when sitting for long periods.
7. Certain infections can cause cancer. Hepatitis B and C are risk factors for liver cancer. The Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a risk factor for cervical, throat, anal and genital cancer.
8. Exposure to the sun without adequate protection, a history of sunburns and the use of tanning beds are all risk factors for skin cancer.
9. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) can be a risk factor for esophageal and throat cancer. When acid from the stomach backs up into the esophagus and even as high up as the throat, it damages the lining causing precancerous changes.
10. Family history can be a risk factor in certain cancers such as breast and colon cancer. There is a genetic link between certain types of cancers like breast and ovarian cancer. Risks are higher with first-degree relatives (parents, siblings and children).

You can reduce your risk for getting cancer by following these recommendations: don't use tobacco products and try to avoid second hand smoke; limit your alcohol consumption; keep your weight healthy; eat a lot of fruits and vegetables and limit your intake of red and charred meats and processed foods; exercise regularly (with your doctor's approval) and don't sit for long periods; protect your skin from the sun; pay attention to your body and notify your doctor if you notice any problems; get the recommended screenings for your age, gender and family history. Finding cancer early increases your chances of survival.

For more information go to the American Cancer Society [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or the CDC [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); For help finding where to go for cancer screenings and medical care go to Texas Cancer Information <http://www.texasancer.info/>

