

You can cut your risk of cancer

Like many people, you may feel that cancer is down to bad luck or genes. However, did you know that 4 in 10 cancers could be prevented if we made simple changes to 5 parts of our everyday life? That is why the Marie Keating Foundation has created the Your Health: Your Choice campaign. This leaflet has some advice on the changes that you can make and how you can fit them into your everyday life to reduce your risk of cancer.

You can find further information on our website: www.mariekeating.ie.

Scientists estimate that we can help prevent 4 out of 10 cancers by:

- 1. Not smoking**
- 2. Eating a healthy diet and being a healthy body weight**
- 3. Being physically active**
- 4. Avoiding too much exposure to the sun**
- 5. Limiting how much alcohol we drink**

Making lifestyle changes can be difficult but the benefits can be huge, helping you lead a longer, healthier life.

You can start by making small changes and building your confidence until you are ready to make bigger changes. Asking friends or family to join with you as you try to live a healthier life can help, too.



Eat a healthy diet. Be a healthy weight

What you should know

- Obesity/body weight is linked to up to 40% of some cancers
- Breast and bowel cancer are linked to obesity
- Eat a healthy diet and keep a healthy weight

Many types of cancer are more common in people who are overweight or obese, including two of the most common cancers in Ireland: breast and bowel cancers. Obesity is linked with so many types of cancer because fat cells in the body are active and produce hormones and proteins. These become 'chemical messengers' that are released into the bloodstream and carried around the body through the circulation system.

To reduce your cancer risk, eat a healthy diet.

Enjoy a wide variety of foods from the 5 food groups:

- Vegetables and legumes (beans)
- Fruit
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and high-fibre
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese.

Chose a smaller serving size

Avoid frying - Grill, bake, steam or boil food instead

Limit treats - Do not eat too many biscuits, cakes, sweets or savoury snacks

Limit your salt intake

Drink plenty of water - Aim for 2 litres a day

Avoid processed meat - Do not eat too much ham, bacon, salami or sausage

Limit your red meat intake - Only have 2 portions per week of red meats such as beef and lamb



Be physically active

What you should know

- Exercise can reduce risk of many cancers
- Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day
- Try walking, taking the stairs or jogging

If you are physically active, you will reduce your risk of getting many types of cancer including bowel, breast and womb cancer, as well as kidney, pancreatic, prostate and lung cancer. Being physically active is beneficial to your health, even if you lose no weight.

It can be easier than you think to increase your activity levels, even if you don't do much at the moment. Making small changes, like taking the stairs instead of the lift or making short journeys on foot, can really help increase how active you are. It's never too late to start making a difference.

Aim to do at least 2.5 hours of moderate activity every week. This is the same as 30 minutes on 5 days of the week.

- You don't have to do it all in one go. All the bits you do throughout the week add up. Just 10 minutes at a time can count.
- You can build up the amount of activity you do steadily over time.
- There is no need to join a gym or train for a marathon, unless you want to.
- The more active you are, the greater the benefits you can gain.

Activity doesn't just mean sport and exercise. Anything that makes you a bit warmer and slightly out of breath counts as moderate activity, including brisk walking, household tasks like hoovering or DIY or kicking a ball in the park.



Quit smoking

What you should know

- One in every two smokers will die of a tobacco-related disease
- Smoking causes 30% of the cancers in Ireland
- If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quit now.

One in every two smokers will die of a tobacco-related disease. Don't be one of them. Quit smoking now. Smoking-related diseases in Ireland kill at least 5,200 people a year, with many thousands more, and their families, affected through chronic illness and disability.

Smoking causes 30% of all cancers in Ireland, including cancer of the lung, larynx (voice box), bladder, oesophagus (food pipe), throat and pancreas. Every cigarette a person smokes reduces his/her life by 5.5 minutes.

If you are a smoker, speak to your doctor or pharmacist today for advice on how to quit.

You can also call the National Smoker's Quitline for free on 1800 201 203, Freetext QUIT to 50100 or visit www.quit.ie.

The benefits of quitting start almost immediately. Within 20 minutes your circulation will improve and your heart rate and blood pressure will get lower. After 72 hours your breathing will improve and your energy levels will increase. Your sense of taste and smell will improve. Within 2 or 3 months your lung capacity can increase by up to 30%. Within 1 year your chance of heart attack drops by half. Within 5 years the risk of smoking related cancers will be greatly reduced.



Avoid too much sun exposure

What you should know

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland
- Over 10,000 cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year
- Be SunSmart- go in the shade, cover up & use sunscreen
- Never, ever use sun beds

More Irish people are diagnosed with skin cancer than any other type of cancer. The number of people diagnosed with skin cancer keeps rising. Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun or sunbeds is the main cause of skin cancer. This means that most cases of skin cancer can be prevented by being SunSmart and never, ever using sun beds.

Be SunSmart:

- Get some shade, especially between 11am and 3pm when the sun's rays are strongest
- Cover up- wear long sleeved tops, trousers and wide brimmed hats
- Wear wraparound sunglasses with 100% UVA protection or a UV 400 label
- Wear sunscreen everyday with at least SPF 15 and five star UVA and UVB protection

Early detection is the key to successful treatment of skin cancer.

Check your skin regularly for damage or changes. Look for moles that have changed in shape, size, elevation or colour. You should also see a GP straight away if a mole is itchy, has an irregular border or is asymmetrical.



Limit how much alcohol you drink

What you should know

- Each year in Ireland, 900 people are diagnosed with alcohol-related cancers
- Alcohol causes 7 types of cancer, including breast, bowel, head and neck cancers
- The less you drink, the lower the risk of cancer

Around 500 people die from alcohol-related cancers each year in Ireland. The less alcohol you drink, the lower the risk of bowel cancer, breast cancer and many other cancers and diseases. If you do drink, drink no more than 17 standard drinks a week if you are a man and 11 standard drinks a week if you are a woman. Be aware of how many standard drinks are in your drink. There may be more than one.

A standard drink



Ensure that you have some days where you do not drink any alcohol at all. Do not binge drink.

People who both smoke and drink are seriously increasing their risk of cancer because drinking alcohol makes it easier for the tissues in your mouth and throat to absorb the carcinogenic (cancer-causing) chemicals contained in tobacco smoke.

About the Marie Keating Foundation

Following their mother Marie's death in 1998, the Keating family promised that they would do everything they could to bring an end to cancer. They committed to providing Irish people with the necessary information to prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest stages. Their collective aim was **"making cancer less frightening by enlightening"**.

Through its community information service, the Foundation's dedicated nurses have enlightened over 210,000 people of the causes and risk factors of cancer. The Foundation is continuing to expand its awareness campaigns on the most common cancers affecting both men and women in Ireland, at local level through its community outreach approach as well as through national campaigns.

Through its Comfort Fund, the Foundation provides financial assistance to people who are currently receiving treatment for any kind of cancer and who, as a result, find themselves in financial difficulty. In 2015 alone, over 350 families received assistance from the Comfort Fund.

On 2 February 1998, our mother, Marie died from breast cancer. Throughout her illness, we could do nothing to help the amazing person who had done everything for us, all our lives. We, the Keating family, have set up this charity in her name to try to prevent others going through what our family went through. This is also ensure that such a wonderful person did not die in vain.

Take care,

The Keating Family



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