UNDERSTANDING CANCER

A Tu Salud ¡Sí Cuenta! Educational Module
WHAT IS CANCER?

- The body is made up of cells, which usually divide and grow in a controlled and orderly way.
- Cancer cells are abnormal. They divide and grow rapidly in an uncontrolled way.

![Normal cells vs. Cells forming a tumour](image-url)
HISPANICS & CANCER

- Cancer is the leading cause of death in Hispanics
- About 1 in 3 Hispanic men and 1 in 3 Hispanic women will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime
Many things we do and do not do can increase our chances of getting cancer. When we eat unhealthy foods and are inactive, our organs start to wear down. We can change these behaviors and may be able to reduce our chances of developing cancer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Factors</th>
<th>Internal Factors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Unhealthy food choices</td>
<td>• Inherit cancer genes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of physical activity</td>
<td>• Abnormal hormone levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Excessive alcohol consumption</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cigarette smoking</td>
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<td>• Radiation</td>
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There is a relationship between obesity and certain cancers, such as colorectal and breast cancers. Cancer can also be harder to detect in obese women and men. Diabetes’ risk of colorectal and breast cancer is 20 to 50% high than non-diabetics.
The following statements are commonly believed to be true, but are actually false.
MYTH #1

“It doesn’t matter what I do. If I’m going to get cancer, I’ll get it no matter what.”
MYTH #1: FALSE

Some cancers may be preventable by:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Exercising regularly
- Avoiding tobacco
- Getting recommended screenings
MYTH #2

“If I don’t have a family history of cancer, then I don’t need to worry about ever getting it.”
MYTH #2: FALSE

- It’s estimated that only 1 in 20 cases of all cancers are truly passed down by family
  - Speak with a doctor about your cancer risks if a family member has had cancer
- Over 8 in 10 of women who get breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease
  - So make sure to take care of your body and get recommended screenings
BREAST CANCER
Breast cancer can start in any part of the breast.

Obesity and lack of physical activity may increase the risk of developing breast cancer in women and men.
BREAST CANCER PREVENTION

- Ways to decrease risk of breast cancer:
  - Maintaining a healthy body weight
  - Engaging in moderate or vigorous physical activity
  - Breast-feeding
- Routine screening called mammograms can help to find growths in the breast before they get serious
BREAST CANCER SCREENINGS

- Screening for breast cancer include:
  - Clinical breast exams every 1-3 years starting at age 25
  - Annual clinical breast exams and mammograms starting at age 40
BREAST CANCER SELF SCREENINGS

- One must become familiar with their own breast in order to notice when changes take place.
- Adult women of all ages are encouraged to perform a self check at least once a month.
The following statements are commonly believed to be true, but are actually false.
MYTH #3

“If I had breast cancer, I would know. I would feel it.”
MYTH #3: FALSE

- There are often no symptoms of breast cancer, but sometimes a person may discover a breast problem on their own.

- Signs and symptoms to be aware of may include:
  - A painless lump in the breast
  - Changes in breast size or shape
  - Swelling in the armpit
  - Nipple changes or discharge
  - Breast pain
MYTH #4

“Mammograms cause cancer.”
MYTH #4: FALSE

- Mammograms require very small doses of radiation.
  - If cancer is present, it can be found in the earlier stages.
  - The benefits of a mammogram outweigh the risk.
COLORECTAL CANCER

- Colorectal cancer starts in the colon or the rectum
- Polyps, abnormal growths, can grow on the tissue lining of the colon which may lead to cancer
- Factors such as obesity and diabetes can increase risk
COLORECTAL CANCER SYMPTOMS

- There are usually no early warning signs
  - It is important to get screened
  - Detecting cancer early can save lives
- Signs as the disease progresses
  - Blood in stool
  - Abdominal pain
  - Change in bowel habits
  - Unexplained weight loss
  - Fatigue
A lifestyle that includes regular physical activity can cut your risk of developing colorectal cancer in half.

Ways to decrease risk:
- Eating a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, high fiber foods, and calcium
- Consuming less red meat and animal fat
- Engaging in physical activity
## Colorectal Cancer Risk Factors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>UNCONTROLLABLE</th>
<th>CONTROLLABLE</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td>• Diet high in red or processed meats</td>
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<td>• Personal or family history of polyps or colorectal cancer</td>
<td>• Being overweight – excess fat around the waist</td>
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<td>• Personal history of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)</td>
<td>• Not getting enough exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Inherited syndromes such as Familial Adenomatous Polyps (FAP) and Lynch Syndrome</td>
<td>• Smoking and/or heavy alcohol use</td>
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</table>
Beginning at age 50, both men and women should get screened for colorectal cancer.

There are several options, some are very simple and easy but have to be done more often.

Some might cost more, but do not have to be completed as often.

The fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) is one of the easiest and cheapest test, but should be completed annually.
TYPES OF COLORECTAL SCREENINGS

- Tests that find polyps and cancer
  - Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years
  - Colonoscopy every 10 years
  - Double-contrast barium enema every 5 years
  - CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years

- Tests that primarily find cancer
  - Yearly fecal occult blood test (gFOBT)
  - Yearly fecal immunochemical test (FIT) every year
  - Stool DNA test (sDNA), interval uncertain
The following statements are commonly believed to be true, but are actually false.
MYTH #5

“Colorectal screenings are extremely risky and painful.”
MYTH #5: FALSE

- There are many different types of screenings and they are all low risk.
- Tests may be uncomfortable but it should not be painful.
“It’s better not to get tested for colorectal cancer because it’s deadly anyway.”
MYTH #5: FALSE

- Colorectal cancer is often highly treatable
- If it’s found and treated early, the 5-year relative survival rate is about 90%
- Only about 4 out of 10 are diagnosed at this early stage when treatment is most likely to be successful
MYTH #6

“Once you get cancer it’s too late.”
Most types of cancer can be treated completely if diagnosed early

Even in advanced staged cancer, much can be done to alleviate symptoms and prolong survival
HOW TO START

- Take control of your health and reduce your cancer risk
  - Eat healthy with plenty of fruits and vegetables
  - Get moving with regular physical activity
  - Stay at a healthy weight
  - Stay away from tobacco products
  - Limit how much alcohol you drink
  - Know yourself, your family history, and your risks
  - Have regular check-ups and cancer screening tests

American Cancer Society www.cancer.org
Find your support system. It could be a friend, co-worker, neighbor or family member.
TIPS & TRICKS

Ask friends and family for healthy recipes that have fiber and calcium.
Try eating meals without meat a few times each week.
There are free or reduced priced cancer screenings. Ask your doctors or go to community clinic and find out where!
## Screenings for Breast and Colorectal Cancer

<table>
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<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40s</th>
<th>50s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WOMEN</td>
<td>• Clinical breast exams every 1-3 years</td>
<td>• Yearly clinical breast exam</td>
<td>• Yearly clinical breast exam and mammograms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEN</td>
<td>• Conduct self exams unless at high risk*</td>
<td>• Conduct self exams unless at high risk*</td>
<td>• Colorectal cancer screening, interval dependent upon test</td>
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</table>

*According to The National Comprehensive Cancer Network, men at high risk for breast cancer should have a clinical breast exams as well as mammograms.
Scenario:

I have made it a habit to get my screenings done every June.
Click to start

Marge, Role Model
NEXT STEP

Start today because Your Health Matters!
# THE PLAN

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<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
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THE PLAN

☐ On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you that you can eat healthy portions daily?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Less Important

Very Important
## MAKE A PLAN

Setting goals is the key to success. Write small, clear and realistic goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<td>What part of your plate is vegetables?</td>
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<td>How do you remember the portions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When will you start eating healthy portions?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES

- American Cancer Society [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- Cancer and the Environment
- Cancer Facts & Figures for Hispanics/Latinos 2009-2011
- eMedicine Cancer Center [www.emedicinehealth.com](http://www.emedicinehealth.com)
- King Huessein Cancer Center [www.khcc.jo](http://www.khcc.jo)