SPOT CANCER EARLY MANUAL FOR LIGHT STATE OF THE STATE O

REDUCE YOUR RISK OF CANCER





We use the term man / men in this booklet, but we understand that not everyone who is born male identifies as a man. Whoever you are, wherever you come from, we are here for you. For confidential advice, information and support, contact our Support Line nurses on Freephone 1800 200 700.

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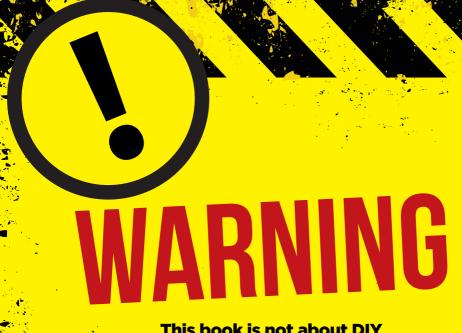
Standard drinks images courtesy of the HSE.

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1



This book is not about DIY

This book is for men

This book could seriously improve your health

Use this book to

Find out the things that increase your risk of cancer

Learn what you can do to reduce your risk of cancer

Understand the common cancers that affect men



Adjust your lifestyle

4 in 10 cancers can be prevented by getting healthier and avoiding risk factors

Spot cancer early

Know the signs, check for changes in your body and get screening tests

Tell your doctor

Get checked out if you notice anything unusual

Cancer facts



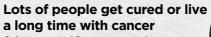
Lots of men get cancer Around 1 in every 2 men in Ireland will get cancer.

Most cancers are more common in older people The average age men are diagnosed with cancer is 69.





You can help to reduce your cancer risk You can cut your risk by making healthy lifestyle choices every day.



9 in every 10 men survive prostate and testicular cancers when they are found early.





Get your cancer information from trusted sources.



DON'T:

Listen to myths, conspiracies or scare stories.

Any questions? Ask one of our cancer nurses. Call Freephone 1800 200 700 or email supportline@irishcancer.ie

Cancer myths



Myth! Cancer is a death sentence

Reality: Treatments for cancer have never been better – spot most cancers early, and there's a good chance you will be cured or treatment will control the cancer for a long time.

Myth! Most cancers are inherited - there's nothing I can do

Reality: Very few cancers are inherited. Fewer than 10 in every 100 cancers are linked to an inherited gene fault.

Myth! Red wine protects against cancer

Reality: A substance in red wine called resveratrol is being studied, but there is no evidence that it is effective in preventing or treating cancer in humans. And unfortunately, the alcohol in wine increases your risk of cancer.

Myth! Mobiles and laptops cause cancer

Reality: There's no reliable scientific evidence to prove that mobile phones, laptops or wifi cause cancer.

Myth! Eating organic food reduces your risk

Reality: The amount of pesticides on our food is very small. There's no evidence that pesticide-free organic food reduces your risk of cancer or that non-organic food increases cancer risk.



! CAUTION: The things that put you at risk

- Smoking
- Being obese (very overweight)
- · Physical inactivity
- Poor diet (too much red meat, fatty food, sugar and salt/not enough fruit, vegetables and fibre)
- Alcohol
- Not protecting your skin from the sun





Other risk factors

Workplace substances like

- Asbestos
- Formaldehyde

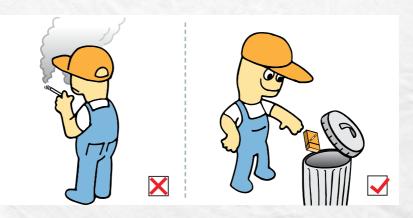
Always follow health and safety instructions.

Know about radon gas

Find out if radon levels are high in your area and what to do about them if they are. See www.radon.ie

Smoking: Quick guide

Smoking is a big risk for cancer, but it's a risk you can do something about.



At least 7 in every 10 lung cancers are caused by smoking.

Smoking causes at least 13 other types of cancer that affect men.

All types of smoking increase the risk – including roll-ups, pipes and cigars. We don't know how vaping affects your future health.

Even if you don't smoke, breathing in **other people's smoke** still increases your risk of lung and other cancers.

It's **never too late** to quit smoking, but the earlier you stop, the more you reduce your risk of cancer.

Giving up smoking doesn't just reduce your risk of cancer. It's the **best thing** you can do for your **overall health.**

"I used the excuse .. that it was too late
the damage was done, I thought I was
too old to quit. I soon realised I wasn't
after a couple of tough weeks I began
to feel so much better."



How to... Quit smoking



Think about the reasons why you want to stop and what might make it hard. Pick a date when you're ready.

2 Get support

- Ask your family or friends to support you and not to smoke around you.
- Talk to your doctor for advice.
- Call the HSE Quit Team on Freephone 1800 201 203, visit www.quit.ie, or freetext QUIT to 50100.

3 Prepare for cravings

Withdrawal symptoms will disappear within a few weeks. Change your routine to avoid times and places when you will have a strong urge to smoke.

4 Take one day at a time

Every day without a cigarette is good news for your health. your family and your pocket.

5 Live well without smoking

Take more exercise and eat well to feel even better. And enioy the extra money in your pocket.



Cigarette smoke contains at least 69 chemicals that cause cancer.



Deal with cravings Remember the 4 Ds:



Delay at least 3 minutes and the urge will pass.



Drink a glass of water or fruit juice (sip slowly).



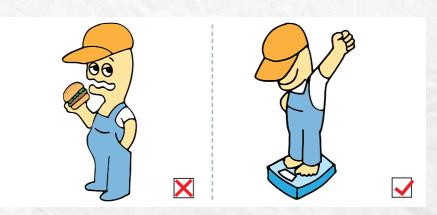
Distract vourself - move away from the situation.



Take a Deep breath - breathe slowly and deeply - to help vou to relax.

Body weight: Quick guide

Getting to a healthy weight if you're overweight or obese could reduce your risk of 11 different cancers!



Are you a healthy weight?

Waist measurement

Measure your waist just above your hipbone. If it's more than 94cm (37 inches), you may have excess body fat around your middle. This fat produces hormones that can increase your risk of cancer.

Body mass index (BMI)

Your BMI is a number that can help tell you if you're the right weight for your height.

ВМІ	-18.5	18.5–24.9	25.0–29.9	30+	
	Underweight	Healthy weight	Overweight	Obese	

For advice on how to measure your waist or find your BMI, search 'body weight' at www.cancer.ie





Don't mistake thirst for hunger. Drink something first if you feel peckish.

Eat breakfast

Get your metabolism going by eating breakfast. Then eat meals at regular times during the day to keep up your energy levels.

Don't overeat

Watch your portion sizes and try not to have second helpings.

Avoid liquid calories

Sugary fizzy drinks, fruit squashes and alcohol are high in sugar and calories.

Drink lots of water - aim for 8 glasses a day

Keep a bottle of water with you and sip throughout the day.

Never shop when you're hungry

Make a list so that you're not tempted by unhealthy treats.

Eat slowly

Enjoy the taste of your food and eat at a table if possible.

Take exercise

Regular exercise, along with healthy eating, can speed up weight loss and make you feel great. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise or 10,000 steps a day.

Foods high in fat and sugar can lead to weight gain

Processed foods can have hidden sugar and fat, so check the labels.

Physical activity: Quick guide



Getting active could:

- Reduce your risk of at least 3 cancers
- Make you feel fitter and more energetic
- Boost your mood
- Improve your overall health, like heart health
- Help with other cancer risk factors, like being overweight.

Activity doesn't just mean exercise

Anything that makes you a bit warmer and slightly out of breath is good. Aim for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 or more days a week.







Keep moving! Move your body as often as you can. All activity counts.

Start with what you can manage

If you're out of shape or unfit, start by walking or doing another gentle exercise.

Increase activity as you get fitter

Set new goals to keep building your level of activity as you get fitter.

Stay safe

See your doctor for advice if you are very overweight or have medical problems.

Stand more, sit less

Avoid too much time sitting or lying down, for example, watching TV.

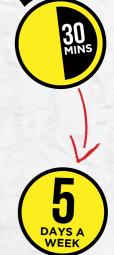
Be active in your everyday life

You don't have to join a gym:

- · Walk or cycle instead of driving.
- Take the stairs whenever you can.
- Play an active game with your kids.

Get fit with friends or family

Having company can make exercise more fun. Plus you can encourage each other if you're feeling lazy.

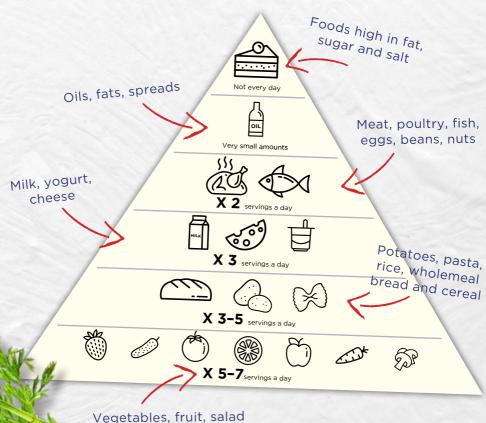


The more active you are, the better

If you can, try some more vigorous activity - the kind that leaves you out of breath. Try to do activities that will strengthen your muscles at least 2 days a week, such as lifting weights or cycling.



Healthy eating can help you to keep a healthy body weight and reduce your cancer risk





Fruit and vegetables

Eat at least 5-7 portions of fruit, vegetables and salad every day. Have some fruit at breakfast, add salad to your sandwiches and have more vegetables with your dinner.

Fill up on fibre

Go for high-fibre foods like wholegrain bread, fruit and vegetables, beans and lentils, brown rice, oats.

Limit red meat

Swap red meat for chicken, fish, beans and vegetarian/vegan proteins a few times a week.

Avoid processed meats

Limit or cut out processed meats like ham, rashers and salami.

Watch your fats

- · Use small amounts of butter and oil.
- · Avoid fatty meat and fried foods.
- Go for small amounts of **healthy fats** found in nuts, seeds and oily fish.
- Cook healthier by steaming, baking and grilling.

Avoid high-calorie foods

Cut down on fizzy drinks, fast food, sweets and cake.

Eat less salt

- Try to avoid pre-packed and processed meals.
 Go for fresh ingredients that you cook yourself.
- Check the labels for salt (sodium) content even foods like cornflakes can have salt added.
- Avoid adding salt when cooking or when eating your food.





Alcohol: Quick guide

Alcohol is a carcinogen - that means it can cause cancer.





Alcohol is a risk factor for:

- Mouth cancer
- Upper throat (pharynx) cancer
- Voice box (larynx) cancer
- Oesophageal (food pipe) cancer
- Bowel cancer
- Liver cancer

A standard drink is...



Half a pint of stout, lager, cider



A single pub measure of spirits



A small glass of wine





Cutting back on alcohol can also improve your sleep, your mood and your energy levels.

Drink less

There is no safe amount of alcohol, but the less you drink, the lower your risk. Even 1 drink a day can increase your risk of some cancers.

Drink no more than **2 standard drinks** a day if you are a man, with 2 or 3 alcohol-free days.

Know how much you're drinking

Most people drink more than they think. Count your standard drinks for a week to find out. Remember, it's **how much** you drink that matters. All types of alcohol increase the risk of cancer.

Measure your drinks at home

It's easy to pour a double or a treble measure of spirits without realising, and a big wine glass can hold 2 or 3 standard drinks.

Drink some non-alcoholic drinks

Try switching to non-alcoholic drinks as the evening goes on. Or have a few glasses of water in between.

Dilute your alcohol

Use more mixer in your drink or go for low-alcohol beer or wines.

Try to quit smoking

If you drink and smoke, your risk of cancer is even higher. See page 9 for tips on quitting smoking.

Sun and UV rays: Quick guide

UV radiation from the sun's rays or sunbeds causes:

- Non-melanoma skin cancer (the most common kind)
- Melanoma skin cancer, which is more serious but not as common.



SUNCREAM



Even on **cloudy** Irish days up to **90%** of the sun's UV rays can reach your skin. Be extra careful if you spend a lot of time outdoors at work, playing sports or in your free time. Your skin may be exposed more than you realise.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland in men, but you can do a lot to prevent it.

Look for the UVA logo

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Around six full teaspoons of sunscreen are needed to cover the body of an average adult.



How to...

Keep safe in the sun

Skin cancer isn't just linked to sunburn -UV rays can still do damage, even on cool or cloudy days. Be SunSmart every day April to September, whatever the weather.



Levels of UVA from sunbeds can be over 10 times higher than the midday sun



The SunSmart Code



Stay in the shade, especially between 11 am and 3 pm.



Cover up - wear long shorts and a shirt with a collar. Wear a hat - a big hat that covers ears, neck and nose! Wear wraparound sunglasses to protect your eyes.



Use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) with UVA protection. **Apply 20 minutes before** going out in the sun and reapply every two hours.

O How to... Spot cancer early

You're more likely to survive cancer if you spot it early. But do you know what to look out for?

Unexplained changes

A lump or swelling

Check your whole body, not just your testicles.

Bleeding that is not normal for you

If you cough up blood or notice it in your pee or poo, see your doctor.

Weight loss

It is normal to see small weight changes over time. But a big weight loss, not related to dieting, may be a sign of something more serious.

Pain that does not go away

If you feel pain for more than four weeks that you cannot explain, talk to your doctor about it.











Persistent changes

A cough, changes in your voice or feeling short of breath

Speak to your doctor if you have any of these problems for more than three weeks, especially if you are a smoker or ex-smoker.



If a spot, wart or sore does not heal in a few weeks, get it checked by your doctor, even if it is painless.

Bloating

If bloating does not go away within a few weeks talk to your doctor about it.

Difficulty swallowing, indigestion or heartburn

It is not normal to have indigestion or heartburn that happens a lot or is very painful. Difficulty swallowing is not normal either. Get it checked by your doctor.

Mouth or tongue ulcer

Having a mouth or tongue ulcer for three weeks or more is not normal and needs to be checked by your doctor or dentist.













If you notice a change, the chances are it will not be cancer. But getting it checked is not wasting anyone's time...

It could save your life!

O How to... Spot cancer early

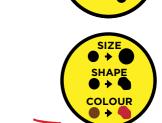
Unusual changes

A change in your bowel or bladder habits

If you have constipation, diarrhoea or problems passing urine for more than a few weeks, talk to your doctor.

A new mole or change to an existing mole

Check your skin every month for new moles. Also watch for changes in the colour, shape and size of existing moles - taking photos every few months can help you spot changes.





Check yourself

Check yourself regularly so that you're more likely to notice any changes.

Get screened

Screening means testing for cancer when you have no symptoms.
Screening is a great way to spot cancer early and give yourself the best chance of getting cured.

Free screening for bowel cancer (BowelScreen) is available for men (and women) aged 60-69.



WORRIED? WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Don't ignore problems or warning signs

If you have any changes in your body that are unusual for you or you're worried, **don't ignore** it. Call your doctor and make an appointment, even if you feel OK. Most cancers can be successfully treated if they're caught early enough. Putting off going to the doctor could make cancer more difficult to treat.

Don't worry

Remember, your doctor has seen it all before, and probably much worse! There's no need to be embarrassed.

Doctors won't do any tests or examinations without asking you first, and explaining what they are doing and why.

Blood tests or the prostate exam might be a bit uncomfortable, but a moment's discomfort or embarrassment could save your life.



🔥 How to... Get a check-up



Be prepared

Your doctor will probably ask a lot of questions, so think about:

- If you have noticed anything unusual.
- Any symptoms you have when they started and how they
- Any medication you're taking
- Your general physical and mental health
- Your lifestyle
- Your medical history
- Your family history

When it comes to your body, you're the expert.

Speak out

 Mention anything that's on your mind, even if the doctor doesn't ask. Be honest and give as much information as you can if the doctor asks you anything.

Ask questions

- Write a list of what you want to ask.
- Listen carefully and ask again if you don't understand.
- You can take someone along to your appointment to help you to remember your questions or what the doctor says.







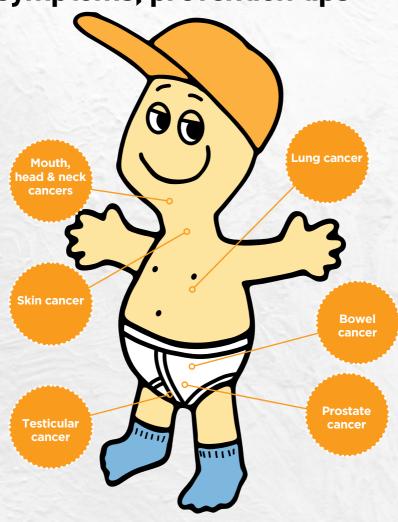
In July 2020, Paul Markey from Leopardstown, Co Dublin, could tell something wasn't quite right. He was out gardening when he felt an intense pain in his back ... "The pain wouldn't go away – even after the doctor gave me injections into the area. Besides the back pain, I felt totally fine but the doctor sent me for an MRI just to get checked out," Paul states.

"I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Follicular Lymphoma ... I always thought, these things apply to other people, but not to me. Those 'other people' could get cancer, but I won't. I won't get sick.

I felt incredibly lucky as the doctor told me my cancer was treatable and indeed curable.

"One thing I would like to highlight is that men in particular, should go and get yourself checked out. Sometimes we men can be a bit macho about the whole thing ... If you notice anything strange happening to your body, listen to what your body is telling you. Early detection gives you a better chance."

User guide Cancer types, signs and symptoms, prevention tips



Your guide to: Prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is Ireland's second most common cancer in men, after skin cancer. 1 in 7 Irish men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime.

- What are the symptoms of prostate cancer?
 - · Difficulty passing urine
 - · Passing urine more often than usual, especially at night
 - · Needing to rush to the toilet
 - Stopping and starting while passing urine, or a weak flow
 - · Feeling like you are not emptying your bladder fully
 - · Blood in your urine
 - · Pain when passing urine

If you have bleeding at any time or other symptoms that last more than 3 weeks, go to your GP.







Get the tools to reduce your prostate cancer risk



Your risk of prostate cancer increases as you get older. Most men with the disease are over 50. If your brother or father has had prostate cancer, your risk is also higher.



Be active in everyday life

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day. For more see page 12.



Be a healthy weight

As the amount of fat in the body increases, so does your chance of cancer. For more see page 10.



Have a healthy diet

Eat fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses. Limit foods high in sugar, salt and fat. Avoid processed meat and limit red meat. For more see page 14.



Get checked out

If you are over 50, talk to your GP about prostate cancer checks. If you have a family history of prostate cancer you should have regular check-ups from the age of 40. A check-up should include:

- Digital rectal examination. Your doctor will put a gloved finger into your rectum (back passage) to see if the prostate gland, which sits in front of the rectum, is enlarged or abnormal.
- PSA blood test. This test measures the level of a substance called PSA (prostate specific antigen) in the blood. Men with prostate cancer can have a raised level of PSA.



Testicular cancer mainly affects younger men (15-34 years). More than 160 men are diagnosed every year in Ireland. Testicular cancer is very treatable and usually curable.

- What are the symptoms of testicular cancer?
 - · A painless lump or swelling in your testicle
 - · Pain, discomfort or heaviness in your testicle or scrotum
 - · Pain or a dull ache in your groin or tummy
 - · A change in the way your testicle feels



Get the tools to reduce your testicular cancer risk

Checking yourself at least once a month is the best way to avoid problems. Here's how:

- 1 Hold your scrotum in your hands.
- 2 Use the fingers and thumbs of both hands to examine your testicles.
- **3** Gently feel each testicle, one at a time, for any lumps or any change in size or weight.

It's common for one testicle to be slightly larger or hang lower than the other. The testicle itself should be smooth, with no lumps or swellings. It's normal to feel a soft tube at the top and back of the testicle. This is the sperm-collecting tube (epididymis).





Testicular cancer is more common in men who were born with a testicle that did not come down into the scrotum (undescended testicle).

8

Your guide to... Bowel cancer

Bowel cancer is also known as colorectal cancer or cancer of the colon and rectum. Around 1,600 men in Ireland are diagnosed with bowel cancer each year.

• What are the symptoms of bowel cancer?

- A lasting change in your bowel habit going more often, diarrhoea or constipation
- Blood in your poo or bleeding from your back passage (bottom)
- · Pain or discomfort in your tummy area or back passage
- · Trapped wind or fullness in your tummy
- A lump in your tummy area or rectum (back passage)
- Feeling you have not emptied your bowel fully after using the toilet
- · Unexplained weight loss
- · Feeling tired or breathless

If you have bleeding at any time, or if you have other symptoms that last more than 3 weeks, go to your GP.





Get the tools to reduce your bowel cancer risk



Have a healthy diet

Avoid processed meat and limit red meat. Eat fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses. Limit foods high in sugar, salt and fat. For more see page 14.



Be active in everyday life

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day. For more see page 12.



Be a healthy weight

As the amount of fat in the body increases, so does your chance of cancer. For more see page 10.



Avoid alcohol

Cutting back or avoiding alcohol will reduce your cancer risk. For more see page 16.



Don't smoke

Cut out the cigarettes and cut your cancer risk. For more see page 8.

Get screened

Testing for bowel cancer when you have no symptoms is called screening. The national bowel screening programme, BowelScreen, sends a free test kit to people aged 60-69 every two years. You send back a sample of your faeces (poo). The sample is tested for traces of blood.

If there is blood in your poo it doesn't mean that you have cancer, but you may be advised to have more tests. For more information see

www.bowelscreen.ie or call Freephone: 1800 45 45 55



Bowel cancer mainly affects people over the age of 50. If someone in your immediate family has had bowel cancer, your risk is also higher.

Your guide to... Lung cancer

Around 1,500 men are diagnosed with lung cancer every year. Smoking causes at least 7 out of 10 lung cancers.

- What are the symptoms of lung cancer?
 - · Wheezing, or difficulty breathing
 - A cough that doesn't go away or a change in a long-term cough
 - Repeated chest infections that won't go away, even after antibiotics
 - · Feeling more tired than usual
 - A hoarse voice
 - Coughing up blood-stained phlegm
 - · Pain in your chest, especially when you cough or breathe in
 - · Loss of appetite
 - · Weight loss
 - Swelling around your face and neck
 - · Difficulty swallowing

If you notice a change, the chances are it will not be cancer, but always get it checked.



reduce your lung cancer risk



Don't smoke

Cut out cigarettes and cut your cancer risk. For tips on quitting, see page 9.



Avoid second-hand smoke

Keep your home and workplace smoke-free. Second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer in non-smokers.



Protect yourself from chemicals and pollutants

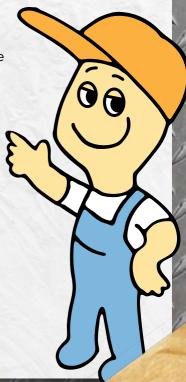
Certain chemicals such as asbestos, metal dust, paints and diesel exhaust can increase your risk. Always follow health and safety instructions.



Check radon levels

Find out if you are exposed to radiation from naturally high radon levels in your home. Visit **www.radon.ie**





Your guide to... Mouth, head and neck cancers

Almost 700 men are diagnosed with mouth, head and neck cancers in Ireland every year. These cancers are more common in men than in women.

- What are the symptoms of mouth, head and neck cancers?
 - A sore or ulcer that does not heal within three weeks
 - · Difficulty or pain when chewing or swallowing
 - A sore throat that won't go away
 - · Difficulty speaking, or having a hoarse voice
 - An unexplained loose tooth
 - A swelling or lump in the mouth or neck
 - Pain in the face or jaw
 - Earache, ringing in the ear or hearing problems
 - Numbness of the tongue or face
 - Blocked or bleeding nose
 - Swelling around your face and neck
 - Difficulty swallowing

The **earlier** these cancers are **diagnosed**, the greater the chance that **you will survive**.



Get the tools to reduce your risk



Don't smoke

By far the most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of mouth, head and neck cancers is to stop smoking. Your risk is increased by all types of tobacco, like:

- Cigarettes
- Pipes
- Cigars
- 'Roll-ups'
- · Low-tar cigarettes

You should also:

 Stay within low-risk alcohol guidelines (see page 17).

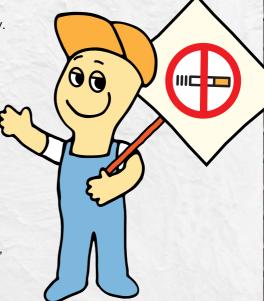
· Check your mouth and visit your dentist regularly.



lf you drink alcohol and smoke, your risk of mouth, head and neck cancers is even higher.

HPV vaccination

The HPV vaccine is offered to children in first year of secondary school. This vaccine can help prevent boys from getting infected with the HPV that can cause cancers of the mouth/throat. penis and anus, as well as genital warts.



Your guide to... Skin cancer

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland. Around 6850 men are diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer and 600 men are diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer.

What are the signs of skin cancer?

Watch out for:

- A change in the shape, size or colour of a mole
- · A new growth or sore that does not heal in a few weeks
- · A spot or sore that continues to itch hurt, crust, scab or bleed
- Constant skin ulcers that are not explained by other causes



Skin cancers don't all look the same. Go to the doctor if you're worried or notice any skin changes.



Get the tools to reduce your skin cancer risk

Use the SunSmart code

Protect your skin from excessive UV rays. See page 19 for the How-to guide.

Check your skin

Look for any skin changes or unusual moles.

Check your whole body once a month, including your feet, between your toes and under your arms. Use a hand mirror to check your scalp and the back of your body.



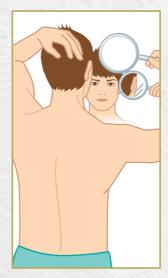
Your risk of skin cancer is higher if you have:

Pale or freckled skin which burns easily

Red or fair hair and blue, green or grey eyes

A lot of moles or unusual moles





WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN?

Gene: Genes are coded messages within your body cells. They tell cells how to behave. They control how our bodies grow and develop.

Inherited faulty gene: These are faulty genes that are passed on from parent to child.

Obesity: Having too much body fat for your height.

PSA blood test: This test measures the level of a substance called PSA (prostate specific antigen) in the blood. Men with prostate cancer can have a raised level of PSA.

Radon gas: A natural gas that can pass from the soil into the foundations of buildings. Exposure to high levels of radon can increase the risk of getting lung cancer.

Rectum: The lower part of your bowel. Also called your back passage.

Risk factor: Anything that increases your chances of getting a disease.

Screening: Testing for a disease when you have no symptoms.

More about cancer

Call our Support Line on **Freephone 1800 200 700** or email **supportline@irishcancer.ie** for support, information and advice about anything cancer-related. You can also go to a Daffodil Centre or look at our website, **www.cancer.ie**

More about giving up smoking

For help with quitting, call the HSE Quit Team on **1800 201 203**, freetext QUIT to **50100** or go to **www.quit.ie**

More about getting active

Visit **www2.hse.ie/living-well/exercise** for tips on getting more active.

More about healthy eating

Visit **www.safefood.net** for meal plans, recipes and more information on healthy eating and weight loss.

More about alcohol

Freephone the HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline on 1800 459 459 or visit www.askaboutalcohol.ie



THIS BOOK COULD SERIOUSLY IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH.

'Any questions?'

Support Line Freephone

1800 200 700

Email: supportline@irishcancer.ie www.cancer.ie



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