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Cancers: Actions I Can Take to Reduce My Risks of Developing Cancer



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What can this booklet do for me?

It will tell about cancer - breast cancer and cervical cancer as well as smoking related lung cancer. By making lifestyle changes, you can begin to lower your risks of getting cancer. By having regular check ups and being aware of your body and the changes your body goes through, you will be more likely to know when something is wrong. When found early, cancer can often be treated.

How you live your life today will directly affect your health now and later on. It is very important that you make healthy choices now. When you see your nurse or doctor, it is very important that all your questions are answered clearly. Do not be afraid to keep asking guestions about your health. If you do not feel your questions have been answered, or are uncomfortable with answers, you can ask for a second opinion. At the end of this booklet, there is a checklist of actions you can take to look after your health and your family's health.



ላ[©] የተመሰር (የታነ) አ ማ[©] የተመሰር (የምሳ) አ

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What is cancer?

Cancer is a growth of cells in the body that is not normal. They are called abnormal cells. Cells are the very small basic structures of living tissue. Cancer cells destroy healthy tissue. Cancer cells are often called malignant cells, and cancers are referred to as malignancies. This means that they could cause death or damage to other cells and tissue.

When cells grow out of control and form a mass they are known as a tumor. Not all tumors are caused by cancer cells. A benign tumor is caused by non-cancerous cells (benign cells). A cancerous (malignant) tumor is caused by cancerous (malignant) cells.

What are the treatments for cancer?

Following are some of the cancer treatments available. Sometimes these treatments cure cancer, sometimes they don't.

Surgery – It is usually done when the cancerous tumor is found in just one location. Surgery is an operation that removes the tumor from the body.

Radiation therapy – It may be used when the tumor cannot be removed completely. Radiation therapy is the use of high energy X-rays that destroy the cancer cells.



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Hormone therapy – It is taken by tablet or injection and it is used to shrink the tumor.

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is the growth of abnormal cells in the breast.

Who can get breast cancer?

Inuit women over the age of 50 have a relatively low rate of breast cancer. The rate of breast cancer for Inuit women under the age of 50 is beginning to rise. Here is a list of risk factors that are known:

- Being a woman
- Being over 65 years old
- The risk of getting breast cancer increases with age
- ✓ Women who already have had breast cancer have a higher chance of getting breast cancer again; as well, women who have close relatives who have had breast cancer are more likely to develop the disease
- Being a woman who began her menstruation before the age of 12
- Being a woman who experiences menopause at a later date than average
- Eating high fat diets
- Lack of regular exercise or physical activity

Cancers



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Seven out of every ten women who get breast cancer do NOT have any of the risk factors.

How can I lower my risks of getting breast cancer?

There are some risk factors that you cannot change such as being a woman or having a family member with breast cancer. There are other risk factors that you can change. You can do regular physical activity and eat a less high fat diet. Giving birth to a first child before 30 years old seems to reduce the risk of breast cancer. Examining your breasts regularly will help you notice any changes in your breasts and give you a chance to find cancer in its early stages. If you are a woman over the age of 50 you should have a mammogram every two years. A mammogram is an x-ray examination of the breast. It can find cancer growths in the breast that are not easily felt during a breast self-examination (BSE).

How do I do a self-examination of my breasts?

Breast self-examinations (BSE) should be done with the fingers held flat and close together by making small circles on your breast. The whole breast as well as the underarm area must be fully checked. You can check your breasts by:

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 Standing in front of a mirror where you can see and feel any changes



Standing in the shower where your soapy fingers will glide smoothly and make it easier for you to feel your breast tissue



Lying down so that you can feel areas that may be difficult to reach while you are standing





Δል**d∿Ր**⁰Ь ፈ^ւΓσ⁰ የb>ትየσdʻ⊐Ր⁰, ለፈ୮ እንት?ለሁለየኄታ**d**⁰ን∿ሁ?

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When do I do a self-examination of my breasts?

Breast self-examinations should be done regularly on the same day every month. A woman who has passed menopause can select any day that is easy to remember. A woman who is still having her period should check her breasts when her period is ending or soon after.









When I am doing my breast self-examination, what signs should I look for?

When doing breast self-examinations, you should look for the following signs:

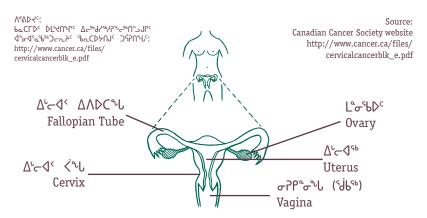
- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or underarm

- A change in the colour or texture of the skin on the breast
- A dimple or an indent in the breast
- A change in the nipple

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Cancers





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If you have any of these signs, it does not mean you have breast cancer. It does mean you should go to your nurse or doctor for a breast examination as soon as possible. During a breast examination, you can request to have someone else present if you would feel more comfortable.

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer is the abnormal growth of cells in the cervix (opening of the uterus).

Who can get cervical cancer?

Any woman. Cervical cancer is three times more common among Inuit women than the general population. Here is a list of risk factors:

- Sexual intercourse before the age of 18
- Sexual intercourse with more than one partner



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>୯৬៤ ÞĽϞበ∿ՐС Δϲჼነፅ/ኁሃፖጐታጭኒው ፭ጐብኄቴ ΔታፖሪÞታው ለፖቴጋኄርጐሪኄĽ >୯∿σ. ÞĽϞበ∿Րር Δϲჼነፅ/ኁሃ-ፖጐታጭኒውና ΔታፖሪÞΔና Δሬ∿Րኁ/-

- Sexually transmitted diseases such as genital warts, or Human Papillomavirus (HPV). HPV can cause warts around the genital area, or changes on your Pap smear
- Smoking
- Not having Pap smears

How can I lower my risks of getting cervical cancer?

You can prevent cervical cancer by having regular Pap smears, as recommended by your nurse or doctor. If you smoke, you can stop smoking. If you are sexually active, use a condom.



What is a Pap smear?

A Pap smear is an important test that shows changes in the cells of the cervix that could lead to cancer. During a Pap smear test, cells from the cervix are taken for examination. A Pap smear does not hurt, and can be done in a regular medical office. All women who have been sexually active should have a Pap smear once a year, or as recommended by their nurse or doctor.



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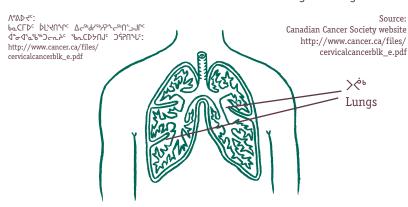
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What is lung cancer?

Lung cancer is the abnormal growth of cells in the lungs. The cancer cells replace and destroy healthy cells in the lungs. It is the leading cause of death from cancer in both women and men.

Who can get lung cancer?

Anyone. The numbers of both Inuit women and men with lung cancer have increased a lot since the 1970s. This is because of the high rates of smoking. In the general



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population, 32 out of 100 people smoke while among Inuit 72 out of 100 smoke. Here is a list of risk factors:

- Almost 9 out of 10 times lung cancer is caused by smoking
- It is related to how long a person has smoked
- Exposure to second-hand smoke also increases the risk of lung cancer

ኔጐ/<mark>ታና</mark>ቴር ኦላቴ 11 Cancers



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ᡔᡥᡉ᠘ᡓᠲᢗᡳᠧ᠘᠆ᠮᢋᢛᢣᠾᡕ ᢤᡨᠬᡒᢝᢛᡄᡎᢗ᠌᠌ᢕ᠆ᠮᢋᡒᢆᢛᢣᠾ Lung cancer happens most often in people between the ages of 50 and 75 years old who have smoked for many years

What are some of the symptoms that I should look out for?

- Chronic coughing
- Wheezing
- Chest pains
- Coughing up blood
- Reoccurring fever

It is hard to know if you have lung cancer when the cancer is in its early stages. Many of the symptoms of lung cancer show up in the later stages. If you have any of these symptoms see your nurse or doctor. These can be symptoms of other lung diseases, but it is important to make sure it is not from lung cancer.

How can I prevent lung cancer?

Lung cancer can be prevented by never smoking and by living and working in smoke-free places. Just being in the same space as a person smoking can increase your chances of getting lung cancer. Getting smoke in your lungs even though you are not smoking is called second-hand smoke. If you do smoke, it is strongly suggested that you quit. The sooner a smoker stops smoking, the sooner the risk will stop increasing.





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See Pauktuutit's website at www.pauktuutit.on.ca for tobacco use prevention and cessation resources.



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ΔοΔ^c CΛ_Λ^c b_CCΓ www.itk.ca

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www.canadian-health-network.ca

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Information Resources

Ask your local health center/nursing station if you would like more information on specific cancers.

Other good sources of information are:

Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association

Toll-free: (1-800) 667-0749 www.pauktuutit.on.ca

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami www.itk.ca

Canadian Health Network
www.canadian-health-network.ca

Canadian Cancer Society
Toll-free: (1-888) 939-3333
www.cancer.ca

Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation

Toll-free: (1-800) 387-9816 www.cbcf.org

The Lung Association www.lung.ca

ኔዮ/ታ**ና**ቴ**C**▷ ጚቴ Cancers



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Checklist of Actions I can take to look after my Health

- Become informed; ask your nurse or doctor questions about your health
- Have a yearly medical check up including a breast examination and a Pap smear
- Do monthly self-examinations of your breasts
- Ask questions when you are concerned about changes in your breasts
- ☐ If you are a woman 50 or over, have a mammogram every 2 years
- Exercise or do physical activities regularly
- ☐ If you are sexually active, use condoms to prevent STDs
- ☐ If you don't smoke, don't start
- ☐ If you smoke, ask for help to quit
- ☐ Ask for a medical check up if you have the symptoms of lung cancer

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Checklist of Actions I can take to look after my Family's Health

- Become informed; ask your nurse or doctor about your family's health
- Talk openly with your daughters to ensure they know about the importance of breast self-examination and Pap smears
- Talk to aunts and sisters about the importance of yearly medical check ups
- Give monthly reminders to do breast self-examinations to all female family members
- Encourage sexually active family members to use condoms
- Do not surround children with second-hand smoke
- Encourage young people not to start smoking
- Help family members who wish to give up their smoking
- Encourage family members to exercise or do physical activity regularly such as camping, sliding, clam digging