



Prevention Checklist for Women

A lot of progress has been made in cancer research, but we still don't understand exactly what causes most cancers. We do know that many factors put us at higher risk for different cancers. Some of these factors are beyond our control, but there are others that we can do something about. Today there are tests that can help us detect some cancers in their earliest stages, when they are still small, have not spread, and are easiest to treat.

Here is some information about the most common cancers in women. The first column shows what can increase your risk (risk factors). The second column shows how you may be able to lower this risk. The early detection column shows ways to find the cancer early, when it's most easily and successfully treated. The last column on each sheet is for you to write down your own plan to help reduce your risk or detect cancer early.

It's important to know that some factors may place you at higher risk than others, and some actions may lower your risk more than others. Also, many cancers develop without any known risk factors present. For a more complete explanation of cancer risk factors, visit our Web site at www.cancer.org, or call us any time, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345. If you have risk factors or haven't had your early detection tests when they were due, please take this worksheet and talk to your doctor about it.

Cancer-related check-ups

The American Cancer Society recommends that after age 20 all women get cancer-related check-ups as part of general health visits. This check-up should include health counseling and might include looking for cancers of the skin, thyroid, mouth, lymph nodes, and ovaries, as well as for some diseases other than cancer.

Special tests for certain cancers are recommended as outlined on the worksheets.

Skin cancer

Risk factors	Risk reduction	Early detection	Your action plan:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever sunbathed? • Have you used tanning beds or sunlamps? • Do you have pale skin and blond or red hair? • Do you sunburn easily or have many freckles? • Did you have severe sunburns as a child? • Do you have many or unusually shaped moles? • Do you live in a southern climate or at a high altitude? • Do you spend a lot of time outdoors (for work or recreation)? • Have you ever had radiation treatment? • Has anyone in your family had skin cancer? • Do you have a weakened immune system due to an organ transplant, HIV infection, or another condition? • Were you born with xeroderma pigmentosum (XP), basal cell nevus syndrome, or dysplastic nevus syndrome? • Have you been exposed to any of the following chemicals? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arsenic ○ Radium ○ Coal tar (concentrated or prolonged exposures at work) ○ Paraffin (as oil, in liquid form) <p>For more information on risk factors, read What are the risk factors for melanoma?_and What are the risk factors for squamous and basal cell skin cancer? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Stay out of the sun as much as possible, especially between 10 am and 4 pm. <input type="checkbox"/> Wear a broad-brimmed hat, a shirt, and UV-protective sunglasses when out in the sun. <input type="checkbox"/> Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, and reapply it often. <input type="checkbox"/> Wear wrap-around sunglasses with at least 99% UV absorption, labeled as blocking UVA and UVB light; or "UV absorption to 400 nm," which means UVA and UVB protection. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not use tanning beds or sunlamps. <input type="checkbox"/> Protect young children from excess sun exposure. <input type="checkbox"/> Check your skin often for abnormal or changing areas, especially moles, and have them checked by a doctor. <p>For more information on reducing your risk, read Can melanoma be prevented? Can squamous and basal cell skin cancer be prevented? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>Regular self exam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Become familiar with any moles, freckles, or other spots on your skin. Use mirrors or have a family member or close friend look at areas you can't see (ears, scalp, lower back). For more information on skin self-exam, read Skin Cancer Prevention and Early Detection on www.cancer.org. <input type="checkbox"/> Check for skin changes once a month. Show any suspicious or changing areas to a doctor. <p>Cancer-related check-up (including skin exam) with your doctor is recommended during regular visits for people 20 and older, especially those with risk factors for skin cancer.</p> <p>For more information on early detection, read Can melanoma be found early? and Can squamous and basal cell skin cancer be found early? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>Steps to lower your risk:</p> <p>Early detection:</p>

Lung cancer

Risk factors	Risk reduction	Early detection	Your action plan:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do you use tobacco? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you or do you now work around asbestos? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you or have you been exposed to radon? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been exposed to any of these in your workplace? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uranium <input type="checkbox"/> Arsenic <input type="checkbox"/> Vinyl chloride <input type="checkbox"/> Do you smoke marijuana? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you now or have you been regularly exposed to secondhand smoke? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have family members who have had lung cancer? <p>For more information on risk factors, read What are the risk factors for lung cancer? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Quit smoking. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage those you live or work with to quit smoking. <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid areas where people are smoking around you. <input type="checkbox"/> Some people choose to contact their state's radon office or the US Environmental Protection Agency to learn about having their homes checked for radon. <input type="checkbox"/> Use precautions when working with cancer-causing chemicals, or avoid them altogether. <p>For more information on reducing your risk, read Can lung cancer be prevented? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>The American Cancer Society has thoroughly reviewed the subject of lung cancer screening and issued guidelines that are aimed at doctors and other health care providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Patients should be asked about their smoking history. <input type="checkbox"/> Patients who meet ALL of the following criteria may be candidates for lung cancer screening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 74 years old, <input type="checkbox"/> In fairly good health <input type="checkbox"/> Have at least a 30 pack-year smoking history, AND <input type="checkbox"/> Are either still smoking or have quit smoking within the last 15 years. <input type="checkbox"/> Doctors should talk to these patients about the benefits, limitations, and potential harms of lung cancer screening. <input type="checkbox"/> Patients who decide to start screening should be screened with low-dose CT scans yearly through age 74 as long as they remain in good health <p>For more information on early detection, read Can lung cancer be found early? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>Steps to lower your risk:</p> <p>Early detection:</p>

Colorectal cancer

Risk factors	Risk reduction	Early detection	Your action plan:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have you ever had colon or rectal cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Has anyone in your family had colon or rectal cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a colorectal cancer syndrome in your family, such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary nonpolyposis colon cancer (HNPCC), also called Lynch syndrome? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you ever had a type of intestinal polyp called an adenomatous polyp? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you had a chronic inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn’s disease or ulcerative colitis for several years? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you older than 50? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you eat a lot of red meat (beef, pork, lamb) or processed meats (deli meat, hot dogs, bacon)? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you physically inactive? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you overweight? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you use tobacco? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you drink more than 1 alcoholic drink per day? <p>For more information on risk factors, read What are the risk factors for colorectal cancer? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow early detection (screening) guidelines to find and remove adenomatous polyps before they become cancer. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase the intensity and amount of physical activity you get each week. For more information on nutrition and exercise, read our Guidelines on Nutrition and Physical Activities for Cancer Prevention on www.cancer.org. <input type="checkbox"/> Get to and stay at a healthy weight. <input type="checkbox"/> Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods, and limit processed meats and red meats. <input type="checkbox"/> Quit smoking. <input type="checkbox"/> Cut back to not more than 1 alcoholic drink per day, if you drink at all. <p>For more information on reducing your risk, read Can colorectal cancer be prevented? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>Starting at age 50,* you should follow one of the 7 options below. The tests that find both early cancer and polyps are preferred if these tests are available and you are willing to have one of them. Talk to your doctor about which test is best for you.</p> <p>Tests that can find polyps and cancer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Double-contrast barium enema every 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> Colonoscopy every 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy) every 5 years <p>Tests that mainly find cancer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly take-home package for guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT), or fecal immunochemical test (FIT) <input type="checkbox"/> Stool DNA test every 3 years <p>*Talk to your doctor about starting testing at a younger age and/or more often if you have any of these risk factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A parent, sibling, or child younger than 60 (or in 2 such relatives of any age) with colorectal cancer or polyps. <input type="checkbox"/> Colorectal cancer syndromes in your family <input type="checkbox"/> You have had colon or rectal cancer or adenomatous polyps <input type="checkbox"/> You have or have had chronic inflammatory bowel disease for several years <p>For more information on early detection, read Can colorectal polyps and cancer be found early? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>Steps to lower your risk:</p> <p>Early detection:</p>

Ovarian cancer

Risk factors	Risk reduction	Early detection	Your action plan:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are you older than 40? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you already gone through menopause? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you obese (very overweight)? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have no children? <input type="checkbox"/> Has your mother, sister, or daughter had ovarian or breast cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Has one of your parents, siblings, or children had colorectal cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you or does anyone in your family have hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC, also called Lynch syndrome), or are you at risk for HNPCC? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you or does anyone in your family have a BRCA gene mutation? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you had breast cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been on estrogen replacement therapy <i>without progesterone</i> for more than 5 years? <p>For more information on risk factors, read What are the risk factors for ovarian cancer? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use oral contraceptives for several years. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy for your specific situation. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your doctor about having your ovaries removed, if you are at high risk. (This surgery causes sudden menopause.) <p>For more information on reducing your risk, read Can ovarian cancer be prevented? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>There are no effective and proven screening tests for early detection of ovarian cancer, but there are things you can do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Watching for and reporting signs and symptoms may allow earlier detection. Although all these symptoms can have other causes, see a doctor if you have these almost daily for more than a few weeks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bloating ▪ Pain in the pelvis or belly ▪ Trouble eating or feeling full quickly ▪ Urinary urgency or frequency <input type="checkbox"/> If your mother, sister, or daughter has had ovarian cancer or breast cancer, or if your parent, sibling, or child has had colorectal cancer, you are at high risk of ovarian cancer. If you have had breast cancer, you are also at high risk. You might want to talk to your doctor about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pelvic exams ▪ Pelvic ultrasound ▪ CA-125 blood test <p>For more information, read Can ovarian cancer be found early? on www.cancer.org.</p>	<p>Steps to lower your risk:</p> <p>Early detection:</p>

