



Prevention Checklist for Women

Great 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. And today we have tests that can help us detect some cancers in their earliest stages, when they are still small and have not spread.

Here you will find helpful information on the most common cancers that can affect you as a woman. The first column on the checklist shows what can increase your risk (risk factors), and the second one shows how you may be able to lower this risk. The early detection column shows ways that you may be able to find the cancer early, when it is most easily treated. The final column on each sheet allows room for you to write down your plan to help reduce your risk or detect the 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. And 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 all women get cancer-related check-ups as part of general health visits after age 20. This check-up should include health counseling and, depending on your age, 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.

We're available to answer your questions about cancer any time, day or night. Call us at 1-800-227-2345, or visit us online at www.cancer.org.

Lung cancer

Risk factors	Risk reduction	Early detection	Your action plan:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do you smoke 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 in your workplace to any of these? <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 with or work with to quit <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>No screening tests have been proven to diagnose lung cancer early enough to improve survival. Lung cancer is usually found on x-ray, and there are often no symptoms.</p> <p>For more information, read Can Lung Cancer Be Found Early? on www.cancer.org</p> <p>If you have any of the risk factors listed talk to your doctor about early detection.</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 colorectal 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 chronic inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis for several years? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you over 50 years of age? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you eat a lot of red meat (beef, pork, lamb) or processed meats (luncheon meat, hotdogs, 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 average 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"/> Get at least 30-45 minutes of physical activity on at least 5 days per week. For more information on exercise, read At a Glance—Nutrition and Physical Activities 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 6 options below. The tests that find both early cancer and polyps are preferred if these tests are available to you 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 fecal occult blood test (FOBT), or fecal immunochemical test (FIT) <input type="checkbox"/> Stool DNA test (sDNA), interval uncertain <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"/> Colorectal cancer or polyps in a parent, sibling, or child younger than 60 (or in 2 such relatives of any age) <input type="checkbox"/> Colorectal cancer syndromes in your family <input type="checkbox"/> You have had colorectal 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>

Skin cancer

Risk factors	Risk reduction	Early detection	Your action plan:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do you or have you sunbathed? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you or have you used tanning beds or sunlamps? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have pale skin and blond or red hair? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you sunburn easily or have many freckles? <input type="checkbox"/> Did you have severe sunburns as a child? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have many or unusually shaped moles? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you live in a southern climate or at a high altitude? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you spend a lot of time outdoors (for work or recreation)? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you ever had radiation treatment? <input type="checkbox"/> Has anyone in your family had skin cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a weakened immune system due to an organ transplant, HIV infection, or another condition? <input type="checkbox"/> Were you born with xeroderma pigmentosum (XP), basal cell nevus syndrome, or dysplastic nevus syndrome? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been exposed to any of the following chemicals? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arsenic <input type="checkbox"/> Radium <input type="checkbox"/> Coal tar <input type="checkbox"/> Paraffin <p>For more information on risk factors, read What Are the Risk Factors for Melanoma? or 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? or 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 age 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? or 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>

Endometrial cancer

Risk factors	Risk reduction	Early detection	Your action plan:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do you or anyone in your family have hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC), also called Lynch syndrome? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you over age 40? <input type="checkbox"/> Did you begin menstruating before age 12, or go through menopause after age 55? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a history of infertility or never giving birth? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you obese (very overweight)? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you eat a lot of high-fat foods? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have diabetes? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you taken tamoxifen or long-term estrogen replacement therapy <i>without progesterone</i> (if you still have your uterus)? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you had breast or ovarian cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you had radiation therapy to your pelvis? <p>For more information on risk factors, read What Are the Risk Factors for Endometrial Cancer? on www.cancer.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with a doctor about the risks and benefits of hormone therapy for your specific situation <input type="checkbox"/> Get to and stay at a health weight <input type="checkbox"/> If you are taking hormone therapy and you still have your uterus, talk with your doctor about using estrogen <i>with progesterin</i> rather than estrogen alone <input type="checkbox"/> If you think you may be at higher risk, talk with a doctor about other ways to reduce your risk <p>For more information on reducing your risk, read Can Endometrial Cancer Be Prevented? on www.cancer.org</p>	<p>There is no simple screening test that has been proven to diagnose endometrial cancer early enough to improve survival.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with a doctor, especially at the time of menopause, about the risks and symptoms of endometrial cancer <input type="checkbox"/> Watch for any abnormal vaginal bleeding or spotting, or any bleeding after menopause, and report it to a doctor right away <input type="checkbox"/> If you have or are at risk for HNPCC, consider yearly testing with endometrial biopsy beginning at age 35 <p>For more information on early detection, Can Endometrial 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 over age 40? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you already gone through menopause? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you obese (very overweight)? <input type="checkbox"/> Did 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"/> 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"/> Have you had breast cancer? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been on estrogen replacement therapy (without progesterone) 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 may 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>

Updated April 14, 2010