Healthy Living Newsletter

November 2013

Diet, exercise, smoking, and other lifestyle choices you make all impact your overall health and your risk for cancer. To help you stay well, the American Cancer Society offers the Healthy Living Newsletter, a monthly email with useful information on eating right, staying active, and other steps you can take to help reduce your cancer risk. | Español

Why Lung Cancer Strikes Nonsmokers

Thousands of Americans die of lung cancer every year, even though they have never smoked. Researchers are learning more and more about why nonsmokers get the disease, and how to treat it.

Quit with the Great American Smokeout

Quitting smoking — even for 1 day — is a step toward a healthier life. Encourage someone you know to take part in the American Cancer Society Great American Smokeout®.

Stay Active with Time to Spare

A busy schedule can make it tough to squeeze in time for exercise. But with just a little effort, you can find ways to be more active every day.

Cooking with Kids: Healthy and Fun!
Inspire healthy eating and create fun family memories by cooking with your children. **Our tips and recipes are just right for kids of all ages.**

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**Leftover Turkey Reuben Sandwiches**

This Thanksgiving, save some turkey for our healthy take on the classic Reuben sandwich. **Get the recipe.**
Why Lung Cancer Strikes Nonsmokers

Most people know that smoking causes cancer, but may not realize how many nonsmokers get lung cancer, too. Every year, about 16,000 to 24,000 Americans die of lung cancer, even though they have never smoked. In fact, if lung cancer in nonsmokers had its own separate category, it would rank among the top 10 fatal cancers in the United States.

Unfortunately, a perception that patients contributed to their own illness by smoking harms both smokers and nonsmokers with lung cancer. Lung cancer expert Joan H. Schiller, MD, of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, co-authored a study measuring public attitudes about lung cancer. The study found that 70% of participants had a negative attitude about lung cancer. By comparison, only 22% had a negative attitude about breast cancer.

Even so, researchers have made a lot of progress over the past decade in understanding what causes lung cancer in nonsmokers and how to treat it.

- **Radon gas.** The leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is exposure to radon gas. It accounts for about 20,000 deaths from lung cancer each year. Radon occurs naturally outdoors in harmless amounts, but sometimes becomes concentrated in homes built on soil with natural uranium deposits. Studies have found that the risk of lung cancer is higher in those who have lived for many years in a radon-contaminated house.
Because radon gas can't be seen or smelled, the only way to know whether it's a problem in your home is to test for it. *A Citizen’s Guide to Radon*, produced by the EPA, explains how to test your home for radon easily and inexpensively, as well as what to do if your levels are too high.

- **Secondhand smoke.** Each year, an estimated 3,400 nonsmoking adults die of lung cancer as a result of breathing secondhand smoke. Laws that ban smoking in public places have helped to reduce this danger. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network™ (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, is working to expand and strengthen these laws to further protect both smokers and nonsmokers from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

- **Cancer-causing agents at work.** For some people, the workplace is a source of exposure to carcinogens like asbestos and diesel exhaust. Work-related exposure to such cancer-causing materials has decreased in recent years, as the government and industry have taken steps to help protect workers. But the dangers are still present, and if you work around these agents, you should be careful to limit your exposure whenever possible.

- **Air pollution.** While it's long been known that both indoor and outdoor air pollution contribute to lung cancer, a recent study published in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* measured the fine particulate matter that contributes to lung cancer deaths in nonsmokers. Using data from a large American Cancer Society database, the researchers concluded that even tiny amounts of increased carcinogens in air pollution significantly increased the risk.

- **Gene mutations.** Researchers are learning more and more about what causes cells to become cancerous, and how lung cancer cells differ between nonsmokers and smokers. For example, an article published in *Clinical Cancer Research* explains that a particular kind of gene mutation is much more common in lung cancer in nonsmokers than smokers. This mutation activates a gene that normally helps cells grow and divide. The mutation causes the gene to be turned on constantly, so the lung cancer cells grow faster. Knowing what causes the cell changes has helped researchers develop targeted therapies, drugs that specifically target these mutations.

[Learn more about lung cancer](https://www.cancer.org) from the experts at the American Cancer Society.

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**Stay Healthy All Year Long**

Receive lifestyle tips each month to stay well and help lower your cancer risk.

[Sign up for the Healthy Living Newsletter now](https://www.cancer.org) »

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Quit with the Great American Smokeout

Every year, on the third Thursday of November, smokers across the nation take part in the American Cancer Society Great American Smokeout. Encourage someone you know to use the date, November 21 this year, to make a plan to quit, or plan in advance and then quit smoking that day. By quitting — even for 1 day — smokers will be taking an important step toward a healthier life and reducing their cancer risk.

Tobacco use remains the single-largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the US, yet 43.8 million Americans — nearly 1 in every 5 adults — still smoke cigarettes. As of 2010, there were also 13.2 million cigar smokers in the US, and 2.2 million who smoke tobacco in pipes.

Quitting is hard, but you can increase your chances of success with help. The American Cancer Society has steps you can take to quit smoking and anti-smoking programs, resources, and support that can increase your chances of quitting successfully.

To learn about the available tools, call us at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org/smokeout.
Receive lifestyle tips each month to stay well and help lower your cancer risk.

Sign up for the Healthy Living Newsletter now »
Stay Active with Time to Spare

Being physically active above your usual activities, no matter what your level of activity, can have many health benefits, including lowering your cancer risk. The American Cancer Society recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity each week (or a combination of these), preferably spread throughout the week. While setting aside time for exercise is important, you can also find ways to be active in your everyday life that take little or no extra time.

- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- If you drive, park farther away from your destination.
- If you take public transportation, get off one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Whenever possible, walk or bike to work, to run errands, or to visit friends. Or try to cluster your errands in one area so you can park your car once and then walk to each destination.
- Take a short walk during your lunch break, after dinner, or in place of a coffee break.
- Instead of sitting down to watch TV, try doing a few simple exercises or stretches while you watch.
Or make a new rule: no sitting down during commercials.

- Stand up or walk around while talking on the phone. Better yet, catch up with a friend or brainstorm with a coworker while taking a walk together.

- Don't let housework, gardening, or lawn maintenance build up — they're all opportunities to get moving. Cleaning out the garage or attic is another way to be productive and active at the same time.

- Find ways to get more exercise from your current hobbies and activities. For example, if you golf, try walking the course instead of using a cart.

- Plan family outings that involve being active, like hiking, swimming, or outdoor games. Be sure to build in outdoor adventures into your family vacation — it can be a great chance to try something new.

Read the American Cancer Society Guidelines on Nutrition and Physical Activity for Cancer Prevention.
Cooking with Kids: Healthy and Fun!

Bringing kids into the kitchen to help prepare food is a natural way to introduce a conversation about healthy food choices. With 1 in 3 American children overweight or obese, learning to eat healthier is more important than ever. Being overweight or obese puts children at risk for future diabetes, heart disease, and even cancer.

Children of all ages can get involved.

Preschoolers can help select ingredients from the fridge or pantry and help with stirring. They can drop fruit chunks into the blender to make a smoothie or sprinkle cheese and vegetables on a homemade whole-wheat crust pizza. Talk about how these healthy foods make your body grow big and strong, and how eating yummy, good-for-you food makes big muscles and strong bones.

School-aged children can put their math skills to the test by measuring out ingredients, or they can use their fine motor skills to crack eggs for an omelet, roll their own lean meatballs, or cut soft fruit with a butter knife. Because they can handle conversation that's more in-depth, talk about how healthy foods make the systems in their bodies — including their muscles, heart, blood, and bones — work well, and how healthy bodies now will make them healthier adults. You can explain that foods that aren't good for you are OK once in a while, but shouldn't replace the foods their bodies really need.
Tweens and teens can use a sharper knife and might be ready to use the stove or oven on their own. Let them choose a recipe and take the lead in preparing it, from finding the ingredients at the market to delivering the finished product.

Be careful how you talk about healthy choices with this age group. Studies show that when parents focus on body weight in conversations about health, teens are more likely to diet, go on food binges, and use unhealthy weight-control behaviors like fasting. But if parents focus more generally on healthy eating, teens are less likely to try drastic means to lose weight. The best way to get through to your tweens or teens is to be a role model: Eat healthy yourself, show that you're enjoying your food, and most important, keep healthy foods in the house and limit junk food, so they have good options at hand.

Looking for some good, kid-friendly recipes? Try the American Cancer Society Kids' First Cookbook. See our recipe below, which kids of all ages can help prepare.

**Recipe: Chicken Burgers**

1 pound ground chicken breast  
½ cup finely chopped carrots  
½ cup finely chopped onion  
½ cup breadcrumbs  
1 egg  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Non-fat cooking spray  
8 whole-wheat hamburger buns

In a bowl, mix ground chicken, carrots and onions together. Add egg, breadcrumbs, salt and pepper. Mush it all together really well! Make 8 round patties from the mixture.

Preheat a large skillet on the stove (for about 3 minutes on high), then coat skillet with cooking spray. Lower the stove temperature to medium-high.

Place patties in skillet and cook on each side until brown and cooked throughout.
Talking Turkey

Turkey is the quintessential food of Thanksgiving and holds the place of honor at many a holiday feast. It's also high in protein, low in fat, and full of iron, zinc, phosphorus, potassium, and B vitamins. It can be roasted, barbecued, grilled, broiled, boiled, or fried. It can also be basted, brined, dry-rubbed, stuffed, and seasoned countless ways. However you prepare your turkey, make sure it gets to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit before serving.

Reubens take turkey from bland to sassy.

After Thanksgiving, you can eat only so much leftover turkey with gravy and mashed potatoes. If you're looking for a new idea to shake it up, consider the turkey Reuben sandwich. This recipe from the American Cancer Society cookbook *Celebrate! Healthy Entertaining for Any Occasion* contains 117 calories and 2 grams of fat per serving.

**Recipe: Turkey Reuben Grilled Sandwiches**

4 tablespoons fat-free Thousand Island salad dressing, divided  
8 slices dark pumpernickel bread  
8 ½-ounce slices light Swiss cheese  
8 ounces turkey breast  
¾ cup sauerkraut
1 teaspoon caraway seeds
Butter-flavored cooking spray

Spread dressing on one side of each slice of bread. Top 4 slices of bread with one slice of cheese each. Top cheese with turkey breast, sauerkraut, caraway seeds, and second piece of cheese. Cover with second piece of bread.

Heat a nonstick skillet to medium-high; lightly coat with cooking spray. Place sandwich in pan. Cook 1 minute. Spray top side of sandwich, flip, and cook an additional minute until crispy and cheese is melted. Cool slightly and cut in half.

Makes 4 full sandwiches. Serves 8.

Order this and other great books from the American Cancer Society bookstore.