Healthy Living

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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 HealthyLiving Newsletter, a monthly email with useful information on eating right, staying active, and other steps you can take to help reduce your cancer risk.  

The Ugly Truth About Indoor Tanning

Using tanning beds, booths, or sunlamps is no safer than tanning outside in the sun. Any tanning, whether indoor or out, can cause skin cancer and premature aging.

Say Yes to Yoga

The benefits of yoga can include control of blood pressure, breathing, heart rate, and other physical functions that can help lower stress and increase relaxation. Learn more about mind, body, spirit, and your health.

Tips for Adopting Healthy Habits

We know we should eat better and exercise more to stay healthy. So why don't we do it? And how can we change? Our nutrition and physical activity expert shares her top tips.
Don't Sabotage Your Salad

Salad is a healthy choice for lunch or dinner, but not if you load it up with cheese, dressing, and other high-calorie add-ons. Follow these tips to liven up your salad the healthy way.

Lettuce: Beyond Iceberg

The darker the green, the more nutritious the leaf. Add more vitamins and nutrients to your diet with these healthier substitutes for iceberg lettuce. Then try our recipe for Caesar Salad.
The Ugly Truth About Indoor Tanning

Many people believe that using a tanning bed, booth, or sunlamp to get a tan is safer than tanning outside in the sun. But the truth is that just like sun tanning, indoor tanning also exposes skin to ultraviolet (UV) rays, the cause of most skin cancer. UV rays, whether they come from indoor tanning or the sun, can also cause wrinkles, rashes, and dark spots. And tanning is particularly dangerous for the young. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people who begin tanning younger than age 35 have a 59% higher risk of melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer.

According to CDC research, indoor tanning is especially popular among young women and teenage girls. One big reason is they believe they look more attractive and healthy with a tan. Many teens and their parents think getting a tan indoors is safer than tanning in the sun. But UV rays damage skin no matter where they come from. The most dangerous types of UV rays can actually change the DNA in cells, which is what experts believe causes most skin cancers. Weaker UV rays, though less likely to cause cancer, are linked to long-term skin damage, including wrinkles and changes in texture.

Indoor tanning is so dangerous, especially for young people, that federal, state, and local governments are taking steps to protect anyone under 18. California, Illinois, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, and Washington have banned the use of tanning beds by minors, as have local jurisdictions in other states. As part of its Healthy People objective to improve the health of all Americans, the US Department of Health and Human Services has set a goal to reduce the proportion of high school students who use artificial sources of UV light for tanning from 15.6% to 14% by the year 2020.
The CDC has launched a new communication campaign to publicize the dangers of indoor tanning and bust these common myths. Did you know:

• **A base tan is not a safe tan.**
  
  Myth: A tan acts as the body's natural protection against sunburn.
  
  Truth: A tan is the body's response to injury from UV rays, showing that damage has been done. It does little to protect you from future UV exposure.

• **Tanned skin is not healthy skin.**
  
  Myth: Tanning gives people a "healthy glow."
  
  Truth: Whether tanning or burning, you are exposing yourself to harmful UV rays that damage your skin. In fact, every time you tan, you increase your risk of melanoma.

• **Controlled tanning is not safe tanning.**
  
  Myth: Indoor tanning is safe because you can control your level of exposure to UV rays.
  
  Truth: Indoor tanning exposes you to intense UV rays, increasing your risk of melanoma – the second most common cancer in women between 20 and 29 years old.

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types, and the number of cases has been climbing over the past decade. Today, more than 3.5 million skin cancers are diagnosed each year in the United States. That's more than all other cancers combined. The best way to [protect yourself from skin cancer](#) is to limit your exposure to UV rays, whether they come from the sun or from man-made sources such as indoor tanning beds.

**How to protect yourself**

• **Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps.** Both can cause serious long-term skin damage and contribute to skin cancer.

• **Cover up.** When you are out in the sun, wear clothing and a wide-brimmed hat to protect as much skin as possible. Protect your eyes with sunglasses that block at least 99 percent of UV light.

• **Use sunscreen** with "broad spectrum" protection and a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Be sure to reapply at least every 2 hours, as well as after swimming or sweating. And always follow the directions on the label.

• **Seek shade.** Limit your direct exposure to the sun, especially between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest.

[Infographic: "The Truth about Tanning"]

Download and share this [infographic produced by the CDC](#) to warn young women about the dangers of indoor and outdoor tanning.
You can always contact us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 1-800-227-2345 or at cancer.org/contactus.
Say Yes to Yoga

The ancient Indian practice of yoga combines meditation, breathing, and precise postures and poses to make a connection with thoughts, body, and spirit. For many, it is a way of life that combines a system of physical exercise with ethical standards. People who practice yoga claim it leads to a state of physical health, relaxation, happiness, peace, and tranquility.

Some evidence shows that yoga can lower stress, increase strength, and lessen lower back pain, while providing exercise. And according to a report from the National Institutes of Health, there is also some evidence to suggest yoga may be helpful when used alongside conventional medical treatment to help relieve some of the symptoms linked to cancer, asthma, diabetes, drug addiction, high blood pressure, heart disease, and migraine headaches. Recent studies of cancer survivors, especially women who have had breast cancer, suggest yoga may help improve several aspects of quality of life. Yoga cannot cure cancer or other chronic illnesses, however, nor should it ever be used by itself to treat any medical condition or delay treatment.

A typical yoga session can last between 20 minutes and an hour. It starts with slow, gentle movements accompanied by slow, deep breaths from the abdomen. A session may also include guided relaxation, meditation, and sometimes visualization. It often ends with the chanting of a meaningful word or phrase, called a mantra, to achieve a deeper state of relaxation. Most people need several sessions a week to improve and to see lasting health effects, but many people report feeling better after just one session.

While group yoga classes can be found in most community and private health centers, it can be
practiced at home without a teacher. Many books and videos on yoga are available. No special clothing is required – just wear something that's comfortable and lets you move freely – although there are many types of clothing that do cater to yoga practitioners.

Also, while yoga is generally low-impact and safe for healthy people, women who are pregnant and people with certain medical conditions like cancer, high blood pressure, glaucoma, and sciatica may have to modify or avoid some poses and should consult their doctor for advice.

Yoga has a low rate of side effects, and the risk of serious injury from yoga is low. However, certain types of stroke as well as pain from nerve damage are among the rare possible side effects of practicing yoga. It's always a good idea to talk to your health care professional before starting any new exercise plan.
Tips for Adopting Healthy Habits

There are many ways to get healthier, and no shortage of advice. But as anyone who has tried to lose weight or exercise more knows, doing what you know is good for you can be tough.

"Changing behavior is very difficult, and this is particularly true from an eating and exercise perspective, because there are so many things working against us," says American Cancer Society nutrition and physical activity expert Colleen Doyle, MS, RD.

But Doyle says even though changing behavior is difficult, it can be done. Here are her top tips:

**Problem**: We can get food and beverages just about anywhere and anytime these days.

**Tip:**
- Before you reach for something, ask yourself if you are really hungry or are just eating because it's there. Also check if you're actually thirsty instead; being thirsty can sometimes feel like being hungry.

**Problem**: Larger portion sizes – both at home and when eating out – make it easy to overeat.

**Tips:**
- When eating at home, serve dinner on your salad plates – it will seem like more food than it is.
- When eating out, order an appetizer with soup or salad as your meal. Or, if ordering an entree, ask...
that only half be served and that the other half be packed for leftovers.

• Get familiar with recommended portion sizes so you can eyeball the right amount to eat.

Problem: Widespread advertising of junk foods and sugary drinks is tempting to kids and has been linked to increased child obesity levels.

Tips:

• Limit how much time your child watches TV, and pay attention to what kind of games they are playing on their phones, computers, and other electronic devices.

• Ask your favorite grocer to have at least one checkout aisle that doesn't have candy, gums, soda, or other sweets, so your kids won't ask for them (and you won't be tempted by an impulse purchase).

• Participate in "National Turn Off Your TV" and "Screen-Free" week events, and encourage your kids' schools and your employer to promote them, as well.

Problem: Longer workdays leave less time for preparing meals at home (which tend to be lower in calories and more nutritious than restaurant meals) and for exercising.

Tips:

• Spend time on the weekend making and planning meals for the week. Cook double batches of your family's favorite recipes and freeze them. Or prep for meals in advance: pre-cook pasta or rice, chop and slice vegetables, etc.

• Get up early to exercise. It's hard, but it's worth it! Lay out your workout clothes and shoes the night before to save time. Ask a neighbor to do it with you, so you'll be less likely to blow it off.

• Add more activity into your day by taking stairs instead of elevators, getting off the train or bus a stop earlier or later and walking the extra distance, or have a "walking" meeting with a co-worker instead of sitting in your office.

Problem: Communities are designed in ways that limit the ability to safely walk, bike, or get other physical activity outside.

Tips:

• Speak up to your city council and other community leaders about the need for bike lanes, sidewalks, parks, and green space.

• Vote for proposals that add more of these to your community.

• Get your neighbors involved.

Barriers to Behavior Change

Read the current research about why it is so hard for people to put the right habits in place – even when it comes to helping prevent cancer.
Don't Sabotage Your Salad

Salad is a healthy choice for lunch or dinner, isn't it? That depends on what's in it, or perhaps more importantly, what's on it. Dressing, cheese, bacon, nuts, and seeds add calories and fat that can turn a light salad into a diet disaster. Follow these tips to keep your salads healthy without sacrificing flavor.

• Choose a variety of fresh, colorful vegetables at their peak flavor, like dark green kale, red bell peppers, orange carrots, and red onions.
• Skip fatty toppings like cheese, bacon, nuts, and seeds. If you must indulge, use only a little.
• Use less salad dressing. In restaurants, ask for the dressing on the side. Try adding it with a fork instead of a spoon.
• Experiment with parsley, garlic, oregano, basil, chives, rosemary, thyme, and other herbs; sprinkle them on your salad or add them to a simple vinaigrette made with olive oil.
• At the salad bar, pass up high-calorie add-ons like coleslaw, potato salad, and creamy fruit salad.
• Add variety to your salad with high-fiber, lower calorie items like beans, raw vegetables, and fresh and dried fruit.
Get inspired with these recipes for salads and other dishes from American Cancer Society cookbooks.
Lettuce: Beyond Iceberg

Pale green iceberg is the lettuce of choice for many Americans. But in general, the darker the green, the more nutritious the leaf. Replacing the iceberg in your salad with Boston, red leaf, romaine, or another dark green variety can be an easy way to add more vitamins and nutrients to your diet.

There are four main types of lettuce.

• Crispyhead
  The least nutritious of the salad greens, this pale lettuce has tightly packed leaves and is shaped like cabbage. An example is iceberg. It's known for its crispness and mild flavor.

• Butterhead
  This lettuce has loose heads, grassy green leaves, buttery texture, and mild flavor. Good examples are Boston lettuce, which looks like a blooming rose, and Bibb lettuce, which has a small cup shape.

• Looseleaf
  The leaves in this variety are joined at the stem and don't form heads. Examples include oak leaf, red leaf, and green leaf.

• Romaine
  This lettuce has a loaf-like shape with darker outer leaves. Its crispy texture makes it a favorite among iceberg fans. It's also the key ingredient in Caesar salad.
An Italian chef named Caesar Cardini, who owned a restaurant in Tijuana, Mexico, created the Caesar salad in 1924. It is said that the original dressing did not contain eggs or anchovies. Try our low-fat version from *Celebrate! Healthy Entertaining for Any Occasion*, available from the American Cancer Society bookstore.

**Recipe: Caesar Salad**

Croutons and salad:
8 1-ounce slices French bread, cut into ¾-inch cubes
16 cups torn Romaine lettuce, washed and dried

Dressing:
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
½ cup fat-free mayonnaise
½ cup water
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon anchovy paste
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon dry mustard
4 garlic cloves, minced

To Prepare Croutons: Preheat oven to 300° F. Spread bread cubes evenly on a cookie sheet. Bake for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool.

To Prepare Dressing: While the croutons are baking, combine dressing ingredients and whisk until thoroughly blended.

To Prepare Salad: Place lettuce in large bowl. Add croutons. Add dressing and toss to coat. Serve immediately.

Serves 8.
Approximately 142 calories and 2.4 grams of fat per serving.