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.

New Breakthroughs for Colon Cancer Testing

Are you wary of colonoscopies? Don't let that keep you from getting tested for colon cancer! There are other tests to look for colon cancer, and one of them might be right for you.

Manage Your Weight With a Food Diary

Experts say simply writing down what you eat can help you keep off unwanted pounds. These downloadable diaries and online trackers can make managing your weight easier!
Reap the Healthy Benefits of a Garden
Planting a home garden isn’t just a great way to create a beautiful yard and yield delicious, fresh produce; the increased physical activity involved can help lower your cancer risk, too. Let us help you get started.

5 Safety Tips for Teen Drivers
Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers, according to the CDC. Share these 5 tips to help keep teen drivers in your life safe.

Recipe: Tomato Surprise
Tuna is a low-fat source of protein and can be prepared in a variety of ways, including this fresh take on stuffed tomatoes.
No one looks forward to a colonoscopy, or the bowel prep that goes with it. But colon screening – testing to look for cancer before symptoms start – helps save lives. Screening can find colon cancer early when it’s small and easier to treat, or even prevent it altogether. Colonoscopy, however, is just one of many tests that can be used to look for colon cancer. And doctors and researchers continue to develop new ones.
**Stool DNA test**

A new type of non-invasive test to check for colon cancer is available now, and may appeal to people who want to be screened, but don’t want to undergo the usual preparation required for a colonoscopy and some other screening tests. It’s called a Stool DNA test because it looks for certain gene changes that are sometimes found in colon cancer cells.

The FDA approved a Stool DNA test called Cologuard in August 2014. The patient uses a kit at home to collect a stool sample and mail it to a lab. The test checks for DNA changes that could be a sign of cancer or pre-cancerous growths called polyps. It also checks for blood in the stool, which can be a sign of cancer.

No special diet or bowel preparation (no laxatives or enemas) are required for a stool DNA test. However, if the Cologuard test does show a possible cancer or pre-cancer, the patient would then need a colonoscopy to confirm it, and possibly to remove any polyps. And not everybody can have this type of colon screening test. It’s only for people with an average risk for colon cancer: no personal history of pre-cancerous polyps, colon cancer, or some other colon problems. Ask your doctor to be sure.

**Camera pill**

Also new is a pill with a tiny camera inside that can take pictures of the colon after the patient swallows it. For now it’s only available as a follow-up procedure for people who have not been able to complete a colonoscopy, not as its own screening test. The pill still requires a bowel prep, and there are some activity limits while the camera pill makes its way through the intestines, which can take up to 10 hours. If suspicious areas are seen, another procedure may be recommended.

**Tried-and-true screening tests**

There are several more common tests that can be used to screen for colon cancer. Some are less able to find polyps and more likely to find cancer. Other tests not only can find cancer, but also are better at finding polyps; these tests may be more likely to prevent colon cancer.

Tests that can find polyps and cancer:

- **Colonoscopy** uses a flexible lighted tube with a small camera on the end to look at the entire length of the colon and rectum. If polyps are found, they may be removed during the test. To prepare for the test, you may be asked to follow a special diet for a day or two before the test. You will also need to clean out your colon with strong laxatives (called a bowel prep) and sometimes with enemas, as well.
Most people are sedated during the test. If nothing is found during the test, you won’t need another one for 10 years.

- **Flexible sigmoidoscopy** is much like colonoscopy, but looks at only part of the colon and rectum. If polyps are found, they may be removed during the test, or you may need to have a colonoscopy later. Bowel prep may be required, but is not as extensive as the one used for colonoscopy. Most people do not need to be sedated during this test. If polyps or suspicious areas are seen, a colonoscopy will be needed to look at the rest of the colon. Flexible sigmoidoscopy must be done every 5 years.

- **Double-contrast barium enema** is a type of x-ray test. It involves putting a liquid called barium into the rectum, which spreads through the colon. Air is then pumped in to spread the barium in a thin, smooth layer to show better detail. Then x-rays are taken. It requires bowel prep, but no sedation. If polyps or suspicious areas are seen on the test, a follow-up colonoscopy will be needed. Barium enemas also need to be repeated every 5 years.

- **CT colonography** (also called virtual colonoscopy) is a scan of the colon and rectum that produces detailed cross-sectional images so the doctor can look for polyps or cancer. It requires bowel prep, but no sedation. Air is pumped into the rectum and colon, and then a CT scanner is used to take images of the colon. If something is seen that may need to be biopsied, a follow-up colonoscopy will be needed. CT colonography must be done every 5 years.

Tests that mainly find cancer:

- **Fecal occult blood test (FOBT) and fecal immunochemical test (FIT)** are used to find tiny amounts of blood in the stool that could be a sign of cancer or large polyps. People take these tests at home with a kit they receive from their doctor’s office, along with instructions. A positive result will need to be followed up with a colonoscopy. However, many times the cause is a non-cancerous condition, such as ulcers or hemorrhoids. Stool tests like these need to be done every year.

**Talk to your doctor about screening**

Regular screening is one of the most powerful weapons for preventing colon cancer. If polyps are found during colon cancer testing, they can usually be removed before they have the chance to turn into cancer. Testing can also result in finding cancer early, when it’s smaller, easier to treat, and more likely to be curable.

If you’re 50 or older, talk to your doctor about which test is right for you and get tested as often as recommended.
Who should be tested for colon cancer?

Getting tested can find colon cancer early when it’s smaller and easier to treat. Regular testing can even help prevent colon cancer from ever occurring. Talk to your doctor about following the American Cancer Society recommendations for colon cancer screening.

Who should be tested for colon cancer?
Manage Your Weight With a Food Diary

Most of us can't just eat whatever we want to, and still expect to meet our healthy eating goals. One way to pay closer attention to what we're really eating is to write it down. Experts say people who keep food diaries are more successful in reaching their weight goals than those who don't.

A food diary doesn't have to be complicated. Simply write down what you eat, how much you eat, when you eat, how you're feeling when you eat, and how hungry you are. If it's helpful, you can add more
information such as who you were with and what you were thinking about while you were eating. Create your own food diary, or download ours.

Another way to track your eating habits and much, much more is through an interactive website or app. Many programs are available online, and some are free. The USDA SuperTracker is one example of a free online program that helps you track what you eat and how much physical activity you’re getting. Look for a program that has a big database of nutritional information on food, so that it’s more likely you’ll be able to record everything you eat. Other useful features of some programs include a way to enter favorite recipes into the system, and ways to network with friends to share tips and emotional support.

Over time, you may see patterns that help you learn more about your habits. For example, you might discover that you usually crave a snack to get you through the mid-afternoon energy slump. It's helpful to note how you were feeling when you decided to eat, especially if you were eating when not hungry. Were you tired? Lonely? Bored?

If certain situations always seem to cause you to eat the wrong foods or eat when you aren’t really hungry, it might be time to make some changes. When you’re more aware of your eating patterns, you can start to change them.
Spring is right around the corner, and getting out in your yard gives your home more than a beautiful lawn and garden. It’s good exercise, too.

Regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle is one of the keys, along with avoiding tobacco and eating a healthy diet, to reducing cancer risk. For a person weighing 150 pounds, gardening burns about 324 calories an hour.
Raking leaves, pushing a mower, bagging grass clippings and leaves, pruning trees and bushes, and cleaning up can all get your heart pumping. Other tasks like hauling bags of soil or fertilizer, shoveling and tilling your garden plot, and spreading mulch or pine straw can be a great workout for your arms and legs. And your shoulders may feel the burn from planting seeds or trimming shrubs.

Since gardening is exercise, prepare for it just as you would any other physical activity, by warming up and easing into it slowly. And follow these safety tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Protect yourself from injury with long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and sturdy shoes.
- Protect yourself from sunburn with a broad-spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF 30 and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Protect your hearing with earphones or earplugs when using machinery.
- Drink lots of water, and pay attention to signs of heat-related illness, like headache, rapid pulse, dizziness, confusion, and nausea.
- When using power equipment, wear eye protectors and no loose clothing or jewelry that could get caught.
- Pick up any loose objects that could get caught in power equipment and cause injury.
- Do not allow young children to use or be around power equipment. Teens should be supervised by an adult.

And if you plant a food garden, you can grow fresh produce to help meet the American Cancer Society’s cancer prevention guidelines to eat at least 2½ cups of vegetables and fruits each day.

Fitting in Fitness
No yard? No problem. Here are some other great ways to fit fitness into your day.
5 Safety Tips for Teen Drivers

Did you know that the leading cause of death for teens in the United States is motor vehicle crashes? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), new drivers between ages 16 and 20 are at the highest risk of being involved in an accident – often due to inexperience or overestimating their ability to handle challenging situations on the road. Younger drivers are less skilled at identifying hazardous situations and knowing how to handle them, and are more likely to be affected by distractions while driving. If you’re the parent of a newly licensed driver, before you hand over the keys,
make sure your child understands the risks and what they should do to stay safe behind the wheel.

1. **Wear a seat belt.** Seat belts can reduce crash-related deaths and serious injuries by about half, yet teens are less likely than adults to use them every time. Remind your child that wearing a seat belt is important whether you’re the driver or a passenger.

2. **Know the rules (and follow them).** Just because a new driver has passed the driving test doesn’t mean they’re ready for any situation that may come up. Make sure your child knows the traffic laws in your area, and understands why they need to be followed.

3. **Avoid distractions.** Drivers with less experience require more concentration, so set rules for your young driver about texting, talking on the phone, listening to music, and giving rides to friends. You might also set out a plan for relaxing certain rules over time as your teen gains experience.

4. **Never drive impaired.** Make sure your child understands the risks and consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and remember that driving while sleepy is also dangerous. Let your child know how to handle situations when they might need a ride home.

5. **Limit driving in hazardous conditions.** Some situations might be best for new drivers to avoid altogether. Consider setting temporary limits when your teen first gets their license, for example, driving only in daytime and in good weather conditions until they have more experience behind the wheel.

Remember that learning to be a safe driver takes practice, even after drivers’ ed classes are over. Have regular conversations with your child about driver safety, practice driving together, and lead by example when you’re behind the wheel. You can go a step further by establishing a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement. Setting and communicating clear rules can go a long way toward avoiding misunderstandings and helping your teen stay safe as a new driver.

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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.](#)
Tuna fish is delish

Tuna, like all fish, is a low-fat source of protein. Whether it’s canned, fresh, or frozen, tuna provides a variety of vitamins and minerals, including selenium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, B-12, and niacin.

Fattier fishes like tuna also contain omega-3 fatty acids, which may lower your cholesterol and reduce inflammation throughout the body. Inflammation can damage your blood vessels and lead to heart disease.
This meaty fish is versatile and can be grilled, poached, braised, baked, or broiled. Canned tuna fish is available in several varieties, including white albacore, chunk light, and chunk dark, and can be packed in oil or water. To limit calories and fat, choose the canned varieties packed in water.

You may have heard that you should limit how much fish you eat because of potentially dangerous levels of mercury, especially if you’re pregnant, nursing, or feeding a young child. Recently, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) set new guidelines for eating fish. The agency recommends:

• Eating 8 to 12 ounces of a variety of fish each week (adjust the serving size to be appropriate for young children)

• Choosing fish lower in mercury, including salmon, pollock, tilapia, cod, and canned light tuna

• Limiting white albacore tuna to no more than 6 ounces weekly

Overall, the health benefits of eating fish, including tuna, outweigh the risks if you eat the recommended amounts and variety.

This fresh take on tuna-stuffed tomatoes is from the cookbook *Maya’s Secrets*, available from the American Cancer Society bookstore. *It’s also available in Spanish.*

**Recipe: Tomato Surprise**

**Ingredients:**
Chunk light tuna packed in water, 1 (12-ounce) can, drained
Red onion, finely chopped, ½ cup
Avocado, 1, peeled, pitted, and cubed
Juice of 1 to 2 limes
Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
Tomatoes, 6 large, ripe but firm

1. Combine the tuna, onion, avocado, and juice of one lime in a glass bowl. Taste and add salt, pepper, or additional lime juice as desired. Set aside.

2. Wash the tomatoes and cut off the top of each one to make a small lid. Gently scoop the pulp and seeds out of the tomatoes with a paring knife and spoon.

3. Fill tomatoes with the tuna mixture and top with the tomato lid.
6 servings

**Per serving:**
- Calories: 120
- Total fat: 4.4g
- Saturated fat: 0.7g
- Trans fat: 0.0g
- Polyunsaturated fat: 0.8g
- Monounsaturated fat: 2.6g
- Total carbohydrate: 11g
- Dietary fiber: 4g
- Sugars: 5g
- Protein: 12g
- Sodium: 174mg

American Cancer Society Bookstore

Order cookbooks and other great books from the [American Cancer Society bookstore](https://www.cancer.org).