

# Screening and early detection to prevent cancer

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Prevention is better than cure. For cancer management, prevention has a very significant role. Much before early detection of cancer, cancerous cells spread very fast. It is important to know that nearly all cancers of the lung, bladder, mouth and skin could be prevented. 50-75% of cancer mortality is related to personal behavior or habit. For an example, 30% or more of all cancer mortality is related to cigarette smoking.

**Overview**

Lung cancer is common due to tobacco use. Quitting smoking can reduce a huge number of cancer mortality. Counseling, social support and nicotine replacement therapy has shown a successful impact.

High levels of consumption of red meat have been found to have an increased risk of colorectal cancer. Dietary plan should include vegetables and fruits daily. Red meat should be avoided.

5% of all cancer deaths are associated with obesity. Higher levels of physical activity have been associated with decreased risk of colon and breast cancers. The Cancer Society recommends that adults engage in moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes for 5 or more days per week.

Several of the metabolites of

alcohol have been identified as carcinogens. Long-term alcohol use has been associated with approximately 4% of cancer cases of esophagus, rectum, liver and breast.

Ultraviolet radiation is a well-established carcinogen for skin cancers. Limiting exposure to the sun during peak hours using protective clothing, hats and sunglasses and using sunscreens can minimize the risk of skin cancers.

A significant proportion of bladder cancers may be due to exposures in the aluminum, paint, petroleum, rubber and textile industries. Occupational exposure to radon and asbestos has been linked to lung cancer.

Approximately 17% of all cancers may be attributed to an infectious etiology. The primary cancers with known associations with viral infections include: cervical and anogenital cancers, hepatocellular carcinoma, Kaposi sarcoma and several types of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Bacterial infection with *Helicobacter pylori* is associated with the risk of gastric cancer.

Use of barrier methods such as condom during sexual intercourse is essential, because some viral carcinogens are transmitted via body fluids. Multiple sexual partners or sexual contact with infected partners can increase the risk of cancer.



**Screening and Early Detection**

**Breast cancer:** Screening for breast cancer can include breast self-examination (BSE), clinical breast examination (CBE) and mammography. Most experts agree that screening mammography should be performed routinely in women between the ages of 50-69 years.

**Cervical cancer:** The Papanicolaou (Pap) smear is the standard screening test for cervical cancer. Physicians recommend starting Pap smears at age of 21 years or 3 years after the onset of sexual activity. Cervical cancer screening by 'visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA)' test is now proven to be effective in reducing

cervical cancer mortality.

**Colon cancer:** Screening is recommended to start at the age of 50 years in individuals who are at risk of colon cancer. For individuals with a first-degree relative with colorectal cancer, screening should start at 40 years and repeat every 5 years.

**Lung cancer:** Currently screening for lung cancer in asymptomatic individuals is not recommended. Chest x-rays and CT scans are screening strategies for current and former smokers.

**Ovarian cancer:** Detection of early stage ovarian cancer has been proved difficult. It has been recommended that women who are at high risk of ovarian cancer due to a strong family history or a deleterious mutation should have both transvaginal ultrasonography and CA125 testing every 6 months, starting at the age of 35 years.

**Prostate cancer:** The mainstays of prostate cancer screening are measurement of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) and digital rectal examination (DRE). The American Cancer Society recommend screening 50 years of age for most men and at age of 45 years for men who are at increased risk of prostate cancer due to family history.

Self responsibility, social awareness and screening are the key factors to prevent cancer genesis and progression.

## HEALTH TIPS

### Health benefits of cinnamon



Cinnamon is a highly delicious spice. It has been prized for its medicinal properties for thousands of years. Modern science has now confirmed what people have instinctively known for ages. Here are 10 health benefits of cinnamon that are supported by scientific research.

- Cinnamon is loaded with antioxidants.
- It has anti-inflammatory properties.
- Cinnamon may cut the risk of heart disease.
- It can improve sensitivity to the hormone insulin.
- It lowers blood sugar levels and has a powerful anti-diabetic effect.
- Cinnamon may have beneficial effects on neurodegenerative diseases.
- It may be protective against cancer.
- Cinnamon helps fight bacterial and fungal infections.
- Cinnamon may help fight the HIV virus.
- Fights *E. Coli* bacteria in unpasteurized juices.

## HEALTH bulletin



Scientists may have found a way to revert cancerous cells to healthy tissue.

### Cure for cancer might accidentally have been found

Scientists might have accidentally made a huge step forward in the search for a cure for cancer — discovering unexpectedly that a malaria protein could be an effective weapon against the disease. By attaching malaria proteins to cancer cells, tumours could be burrowed into and then destroyed and it seems to be effective on 90 per cent of types of cancers.

Danish researchers were hunting for a way of protecting pregnant women from malaria, which can cause huge problems because it attacks the placenta. But they found at the same time that armed malaria proteins can attack cancer, too — an approach which could be a step towards curing the disease.

The process has already been tested in cells and on mice with cancer, with the findings described in a new article for the journal Cancer Cell. Scientists hope that they can begin testing the discovery on humans in the next four years.

## Down to the 'dirty' business: infants' bowel movements

DR MAHMOOD KAZI MOHAMMED

A frequently expressed concern by new parents is whether their baby's bowel movements are normal: are there too many? Too little? Is this the normal color? What about the consistency? Are there differences between the stools of formula-fed and breast-fed infants?

In the first 48 hours of life, babies are expected to pass meconium, which is a sticky green-black substance that has built up in the baby's digestive system during gestation. Babies usually start passing meconium some time in the twelve hours after birth; this is a sign that the bowel system is healthy and functioning properly. If an infant doesn't pass meconium within the first 24 hours, it could be a sign of intestinal obstruction.

Breastfed babies pass loose, grainy textured stools that look like mustard (I hope you'll still enjoy mustard after having read this!). Breastfed infants' stools tend to have a sweet smell which is not unpleasant. Breastfed babies typically pass a bowel movement after each meal.

In formula-fed babies, the color of the stools is usually brown-green, and the texture is loose and grainy with the consistency of peanut butter, so it's relatively more solid in texture compared to



the stools of breastfed infants. The smell is strong. Formula-fed babies usually pass one bowel movement per day.

When your baby starts eating solid foods, his stools will become more solid and variable in color. This is pretty much normal. The odor of the stools will be much stronger because of the added sugars and fats. Green vegetables, such as peas and spinach, may turn the stool a deep-green color; beets may make it red (beets sometimes make urine red as well). If you give your baby meals that are not well mashed or strained, expect that his stools may contain undigested pieces of food, especially hulls of peas or corn, and the skin of toma-

toes or other vegetables. All of this is normal.

You also need to remember that your baby's digestive system is still not fully mature, so it will be some time before it can fully process these new foods. If the stools are extremely loose, watery, or full of mucus, however, it may mean the digestive tract is irritated. In this case, reducing the amount of solids and slowing down the solid food introduction is advised. If the stools continue to be loose, watery, or full of mucus, this may signal the presence of food allergy; consulting your child's pediatrician in such case is needed.

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## NEWS

### Launch of the nation's smallest and most advanced first aid kit

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka has announced the city-wide release of their first aid kit, the nation's first international standard on-the-go size first aid kit that combines the best in

life-saving tools, design and customer-friendly features. The small and light bag brings users to the next level in customer experience and self-help services. "Consumers now look for more affordable and smaller portable equipment, and we've responded by introducing the nation's smallest and most advanced first aid kit, making life-saving tools more usable and redefining today's market," said the company's corporate branding and market communications division. "Throughout our company, we have strived to give customers the best possible experience and bring them closer to what the international market offers." For an affordable price, the Apollo first aid kit is essential for home, office, travel and other medical emergencies.



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## Sinusitis

### Symptoms

- A green or yellow discharge from your nose
- A blocked nose
- Pain and tenderness around your cheeks, eyes or forehead
- A high temperature (fever) of 38° C (100.4° F) or more
- Toothache
- Bad breath (halitosis)

### Prevention

- Treat stuffiness (nasal congestion) caused by colds or allergies promptly
- Avoid smoking
- If you have allergies, avoid the things that trigger your allergy attacks
- Make sure your child gets all the recommended immunizations

