



World  
Cancer  
Research  
Fund

# MEN'S HEALTH GUIDE



Dear reader,

Cancer. It's a word we often avoid saying, let alone thinking about. And as men, we are less likely to do things for the good of our health than women (according to the research). But by taking action now, you can make cancer less likely in your future.

As a doctor, it's disheartening that so many people don't know that their lifestyle has an impact on their risk of getting cancer – instead, cancer is seen as either down to luck or something that 'won't happen to me'.

But it is worth thinking about. We are not powerless against cancer. If we all lived a healthier lifestyle, which includes not smoking, avoiding excess sun exposure, eating a healthy diet, being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight, around 40 per cent of cancer cases could be prevented.

If you want to take control of your health, this guide is a great place to start. Written with people like you and me in mind, it looks at the cancers of which we men are most at risk of and gives tips on how we can protect ourselves. Our advice has been developed in a way that means they can fit in with our daily lives and how we like to spend our time.

Use this guide to start taking steps to improve your odds of a healthier, cancer-free future.

Kindest regards



**Professor Martin Wiseman**

Medical Doctor and Medical and Scientific Adviser,  
World Cancer Research Fund



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# Men's health – the facts



**68% OF MEN OVER 16**  
ARE CLASSIFIED AS  
**OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE**

(ENGLAND, 2019)



AROUND **13,000 MORE**  
**CASES OF CANCER**  
ARE DIAGNOSED EACH YEAR  
**IN MEN**  
COMPARED TO **WOMEN**

(UK, 2019)



AROUND **1 IN 3 MEN**  
**DRINK MORE THAN**  
THE GOVERNMENT'S ALCOHOL  
GUIDELINES – THAT'S THE  
EQUIVALENT OF DRINKING  
MORE THAN **7 PINTS**  
**OF BEER PER WEEK**

(ENGLAND 2019)



ONLY ABOUT  
**5-10%** OF  
ALL CANCERS  
RESULT FROM  
**SPECIFIC**  
**INHERITED**  
**GENES**



**PROSTATE,  
LUNG &  
BOWEL  
CANCER**  
ARE THE **MOST**  
**COMMON**  
**CANCERS**  
AMONG MEN,  
MAKING UP **MORE**  
**THAN HALF**  
OF ALL **CANCERS**  
WHICH DEVELOP  
**IN UK MEN**

ABOUT **40%** OF **CANCERS**  
**COULD BE PREVENTED IF EVERYONE**  
**LIVED A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, INCLUDING**  
**EATING A HEALTHY DIET,**  
**MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WEIGHT,**  
**BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE,**  
**NOT SMOKING & BEING SAFE IN THE SUN**

# Common cancers in UK men

## 1 Prostate cancer

**About 55,000 new cases a year**

**Possible symptoms:** weak or reduced urine flow, need to urinate frequently, difficulty or pain passing urine, blood in urine or semen.

**Lifestyle risk factors:** there is strong evidence that being overweight or obese is a cause of advanced prostate cancer. It's the more aggressive type and can be fatal.

**Early detection:** men aged 50 and over may be advised to have a PSA test by their doctor, usually if they have some of the symptoms above. It is an initial test for helping diagnosis but as raised levels of PSA can also be caused by other conditions, it can't on its own confirm if someone has the disease.

For more information, visit:  
[cancerscreening.nhs.uk/prostate](https://cancerscreening.nhs.uk/prostate)

## 2 Bowel cancer

**About 25,300 new cases a year**

**Possible symptoms:** bleeding from the back passage, abdominal pain, change in bowel habits, a lump in the abdomen.

**Lifestyle risk factors:** a diet high in red and processed meat, being overweight or obese, a diet low

in fibre (found in foods such as vegetables, fruit, wholegrains (like wholewheat pasta) and pulses (beans, peas and lentils), not doing enough physical activity, smoking, and drinking alcohol.

**Early detection:** the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme provides screening for all men (and women) aged 60 and over, and from 50 in Scotland.

For more information, visit:  
[cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel](https://cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel)

## 3 Lung cancer

**About 25,100 new cases a year**

**Possible symptoms:** a cough that lasts for more than two or three weeks, coughing up blood, unexplained weight loss, shortness of breath, chest pain, fatigue, and stubborn chest infections.

**Lifestyle risk factors:** smoking causes over 90 per cent of lung cancers in men, so the most important thing you can do to protect yourself is to not smoke or give up smoking. Taking high-dose Vitamin A supplements can also increase the risk of lung cancer in current and ex-smokers.

**Early detection:** if you're concerned, get checked out by your doctor.

## 4 Skin cancer (melanoma)

About 9,000 new cases a year

**Possible symptoms:** the development of a new mole or an existing one that has increased in size, changed shape (especially with an irregular edge), become darker in colour, has become itchy, inflamed or started bleeding; or a change to the skins appearance.

**Lifestyle risk factors:** ultraviolet light from sun exposure or sunbed use.

**Early detection:** get any changes to your skin or moles checked by your doctor.

## 5 Kidney cancer

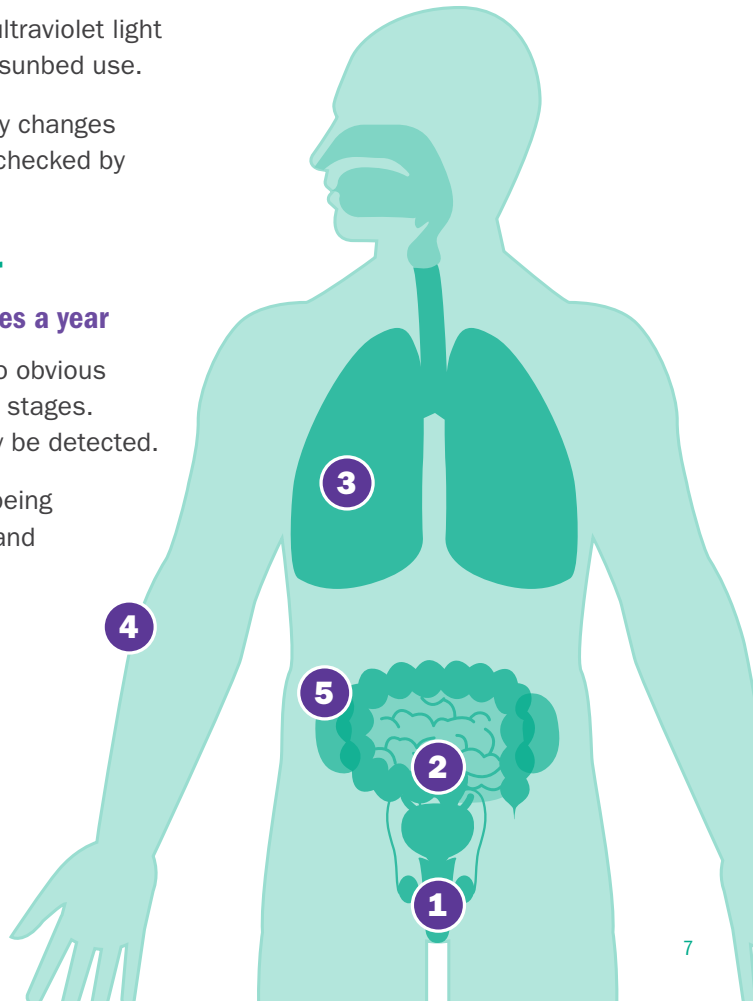
About 7,600 new cases a year

**Possible symptoms:** no obvious symptoms in the early stages. Blood in the urine may be detected.

**Lifestyle risk factors:** being overweight or obese, and smoking.



Having any of the symptoms described doesn't mean that you have cancer, but it's best to visit your doctor and get checked out. It's also a good idea to find out if any types of cancer run in your family, and to speak to your doctor if you are concerned.



# Cancer prevention checklist

Many people think that cancer is the result of our genetics or bad luck, but science has shown that we aren't powerless against cancer. Many cases of common cancers could be prevented if we all:



**Stayed active**



**Ate more wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and pulses** (beans, peas and lentils)



**Ate less red meat and little, if any, processed meat** (like bacon and ham)



**Drank little, if any, alcohol**



**Kept a healthy weight**, which can be helped by:



**Eating less high-calorie processed foods** (like crisps, chocolate and fried foods)



**Drinking fewer sugary drinks** (like cola)



**Didn't smoke or gave up smoking**



**Were careful in the sun**

## Take action for your health

No doubt you will already be doing some of the things in the checklist. For others, starting to make a few small changes to your lifestyle could help to make a big difference to your health.

Take the quiz on the next page to see how healthy your lifestyle is right now and what changes you could make to help you towards a healthier, cancer-free future.

Try our 5-minute **Cancer Health Check**: [wcrf-uk.org/cancer-check](https://wcrf-uk.org/cancer-check)





# How healthy are you?

**1 In total, how much physical activity do you do a week?** Any activity that raises your heart rate and makes you breathe deeper counts, such as brisk walking.

- a) 150 minutes or more a week
- b) 90–149 minutes a week
- c) Less than 90 minutes a week

**2 How many portions of fruit and vegetables do you eat a day?**

A portion is 80g, or a large handful.

- a) 5 or more
- b) 3–4
- c) 2 or fewer

**3 How often do you eat red meat?**

This includes beef, pork and lamb.

- a) I don't eat red meat; or up to 3 times a week
- b) 4–5 times a week
- c) Every day

**4 When you have bread, pasta or rice, you tend to eat:**

- a) Mostly brown or wholegrain
- b) Equal amounts of brown and white
- c) Mostly white

**5 How much alcohol do you drink?**

One unit equals half a pint of beer or a single measure of spirits. A small glass (125ml) of wine contains 1.5 units.

- a) I don't drink alcohol; or only 1 or 2 units on special occasions
- b) Up to 14 units a week
- c) More than 14 units a week

**6 When you're thirsty, what do you tend to drink?**

- a) Water; sugar-free or diet soft drinks; or unsweetened tea or coffee
- b) Vary between a) and c)
- c) Sugary soft drinks like cola or energy drinks; fruit juice; or tea or coffee with sugar

**7 Do you smoke?**

- a) No; or I used to but have given up
- b) Yes, but I am trying to give up
- c) Yes

**8 Do you know your weight and Body Mass Index (BMI)?**

- a) Yes, I am a healthy weight
- b) Yes, I need to lose weight; or I am underweight
- c) No

## How did you score?

**Mostly As** – Well done, you seem to be living a healthy lifestyle already. Keep reading for extra tips and suggestions to help you maintain your health.

**Mostly Bs** – You're on the right track, but there's room for improvement. Keep reading to see what else you can do to be healthier and help protect yourself against cancer.

**Mostly Cs** – Your health could benefit if you made changes to your lifestyle. Even small changes could make a big difference and mean you're less likely to develop cancer. Keep reading to get started.



“  
It’s important  
to keep  
physically  
active – both  
for our mental  
and physical  
health.  
”

## Getting more active

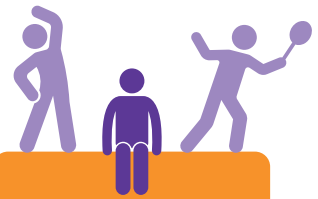
Life can often get in the way of staying active but making time for physical activity is important for your overall health. Whatever your age or level of fitness, it is never too late to start.

**Our research has shown that physical activity can help protect against certain cancers, including colon, and helps protect against weight gain**

## Challenge yourself to get active

It is recommended to do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity every week. If that sounds like a lot, remember, it all adds up – even short chunks of 5–10 minutes count towards your weekly target.

- ▶ If you can talk but not sing, then it is likely you are doing moderate-intensity activity. Examples of moderate-intensity activities include brisk walking, cycling, gardening and swimming.
- ▶ If you're doing vigorous-intensity activity, you will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Examples of vigorous-intensity activities include running, fast cycling, and sports like squash and football.



**Around 1 in 3 men don't meet the recommended 150 minutes a week of physical activity**

## Practical tips for getting active

### Active transport

Try cycling, jogging or even power walking for part or all of your journey to work.



### Be proactive

Make small changes to your normal routine like taking the stairs, walking up the escalator, or getting up to talk to a colleague.



### Lunch break

Maybe you have a gym nearby where you can go for a swim or attend a class, or simply stick on your trainers and go for a walk or run.



### Keep it fun

An activity you enjoy is much easier to stick to. Inviting a friend or colleague to join you for a walk or jog can make it more fun.



If you have been inactive for a while or have any health conditions, it is a good idea to speak to your doctor first.

# Mix up your movement

Being active doesn't just mean going for a run or to the gym. For all-round fitness, you should try to incorporate cardiovascular ('cardio') activities, muscle-strengthening activities, as well as flexibility and balance exercises. Try to incorporate a mix of each throughout your week.

## Cardiovascular activities

This type of exercise raises your heart rate and increases your breathing rate. It helps to increase your fitness, endurance and stamina.



**Frequency:** Fit in some cardiovascular activity every day.



**Time:** at least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity spread throughout the week.



**Intensity:** Aim for moderate (where you are still able to talk) to vigorous (where talking becomes difficult and you will be more out of breath).



**Type:** Includes brisk walking, jogging, playing football, squash, cycling and swimming.

## Muscle-strengthening activities

These types of exercises work our muscles against weight or resistance and helps keep our muscles and bones healthy.



**Frequency:** Two or more days a week.



**Time:** 20–30 minutes, exercising a range of muscle groups within this time.



**Intensity:** Aim to complete three sets of 10 repetitions per exercise.



**Type:** Includes using weights, resistance bands, or exercises that use your body weight, such as doing press-ups and squats.

## Flexibility and balance exercises

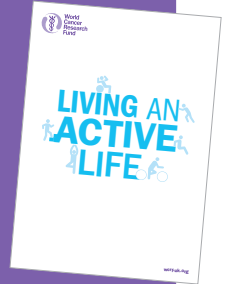
Stretching is important for helping to improve flexibility and posture, releasing muscle tension and might help reduce the risk of injury. Balance exercises are also important, especially as you get older, to help reduce the risk of falls.

## Sit less

As well as moving more, it's important to limit sedentary time – this means not sitting or lying down more than necessary, when not sleeping.

There is strong evidence that excess screen time (time spent doing sedentary activities like watching television or using a computer) is a cause of weight gain. If you spend a lot of time sitting down, try to take regular standing or walking breaks if you can.

For a variety of exercises you can try, and for more advice and tips on getting more active and sitting less, check out our guide, **Living an active life**. Available at: [wcrf-uk.org/activelife](http://wcrf-uk.org/activelife)



### The health benefits of keeping active

**Physical activity helps to improve your quality of life and provides a wide range of benefits to your health – physically and mentally.**

#### Being physically active helps to:

- ▶ Reduce the risk of developing certain cancers, heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes
- ▶ Improve fitness, strength, flexibility and balance
- ▶ Maintain and increase muscle (with muscle-strengthening activities)
- ▶ Manage your weight
- ▶ Manage depression, anxiety and stress
- ▶ Support your immune system
- ▶ Make you feel good
- ▶ Improve your sleep
- ▶ Improve your mood
- ▶ Give you more energy



# Keeping a healthy weight

Did you know that being a healthy weight is the most important way you can reduce your risk of cancer – after choosing not to smoke? With two in three men in the UK currently overweight or obese, as a nation we are doing a lot of potential harm to our health.

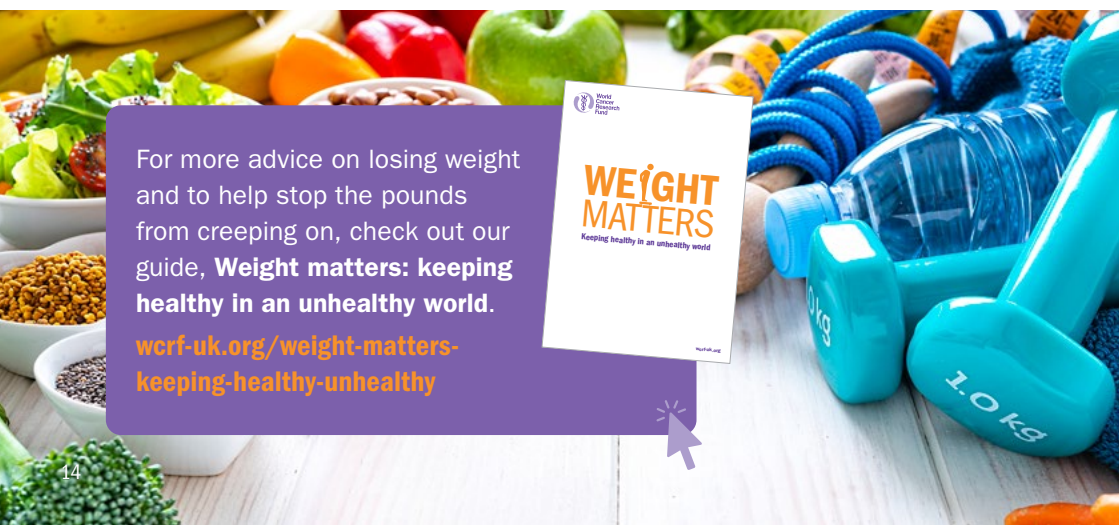
We have strong evidence that overweight or obesity is a cause of at least **12 different cancers**, including the ones that are more common in men like bowel and prostate cancer. Being a healthy weight can also help reduce our risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and other diseases.

## How to stay a healthy weight

Given the importance of being a healthy weight for cancer prevention, it's probably not surprising that a lot of the advice in this guide can help to protect you against cancer by helping you to maintain a healthy weight.

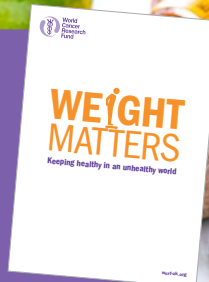
**The average adult man needs around 2,500 calories a day**

Your weight is a balancing act between the energy you put in (calories from food and drinks) and the energy you use (for normal daily functions and to fuel physical activity). If you eat or drink more than your body needs, you will put on weight. The reverse is also true: if you regularly use more energy than you consume, you will start to lose weight.



For more advice on losing weight and to help stop the pounds from creeping on, check out our guide, **Weight matters: keeping healthy in an unhealthy world**.

[wcrf-uk.org/weight-matters-keeping-healthy-unhealthy](http://wcrf-uk.org/weight-matters-keeping-healthy-unhealthy)



# How do you measure up?

## Your BMI

Body Mass Index (BMI) is a simple way to check if you are a healthy weight for your height.

### To calculate your BMI:

1. Measure your height, in metres  
(1ft = 0.3m).
2. Weigh yourself, in kilograms  
(1 stone = 6.35kg).
3. Divide your weight by your height.  
Then divide your answer by your height again to work out your BMI.

Or put your details into our  
online BMI calculator:

[wcrf-uk.org/bmi-calculator](http://wcrf-uk.org/bmi-calculator)



BMI	
Less than 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Healthy weight
25 – 29.9	Overweight
30 or more	Obese

Using BMI might not be an accurate indicator for some people, such as older people, women who are pregnant, athletes (especially those with a large proportion of muscle), certain ethnic groups, and those less than 1.5m/5ft tall.



If your BMI is below 18.5, this puts you in the underweight range. Being underweight isn't good for your health. Please speak to your doctor as they can offer help and advice.



## Your waist measurement

Where we store fat in our bodies is also important. Carrying too much fat around the waist is linked to a greater risk of cancer, and also increases the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

### Measure your waist to check that it's within the healthy range:

1. Place the tape measure around your waist, halfway between your lowest rib and the top of your hip bone. If you have trouble finding this point, then lean to one side and see where the skin folds. This is the point where you can measure your waist.
2. Make sure the tape is straight and snug, but not digging into your skin.
3. Breathe normally, and measure after you have breathed out.

A healthy waist measurement for men is less than 94cm (37 inches), and for men of African Caribbean, South Asian, Chinese and Japanese origin, less than 90cm (35.4 inches)



### Target a healthy weight

**If your BMI or waist measurement is above the healthy range, your health could benefit from trying to lose a few pounds.**

Aim to gradually lose weight by making healthy changes to your diet and adding in more activity: **dropping 0.5–1kg (1–2lbs) a week is a realistic goal and one that you can achieve healthily.** Once you have achieved your weight loss goal, it's important to continue eating healthily and being active to help you maintain a healthy weight.







Reshaping your plate will help you to eat more wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and pulses.

## Eating well

Looking at what you put on your plate at mealtimes is a simple way to start checking if what you eat could be healthier. For a healthy and balanced meal, at least three-quarters of your plate should be made up of vegetables, pulses such as beans, and wholegrains like brown rice.

**1/4**

(or less)

**lean meat, poultry, fish** (white and oily), or **plant-based protein sources** such as soya



**3/4**

(or more)

**wholegrains, pulses, vegetables and fruit**

## What should make up most of your plate?

- ▶ **Vegetables (excluding potatoes) and fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried and canned in water or natural juices all count towards your 5 A DAY.
- ▶ **Pulses** – eg beans, peas and lentils, count towards 1 of your 5 A DAY. No matter how much you eat, pulses only count as a maximum of 1 of your 5 A DAY.
- ▶ **Grains and cereals** – eg rice, oats, pasta, bread and unsweetened breakfast cereals. Opt for wholegrain varieties such as wholemeal bread, wholewheat pasta, brown rice, and breakfast cereals such as shredded wheat.
- ▶ **Starchy vegetables** – eg potatoes, sweet potatoes, and yams. Try not to add fat, like butter or cream, and opt for boiled or steamed rather than roasted or fried in oil.

## Why 5 A DAY?

It's recommended to have at least five portions of a variety of different coloured vegetables and fruit every day.

Most of these foods are low in calories and high in fibre which can make us feel fuller on fewer calories, which is a great way of helping to manage our weight. They also contain a variety of different vitamins and minerals that help to support good health.

## 5 A DAY – what counts?

**A portion weighs 80g (30g dried or 150ml juiced)**



**Vegetables** like spinach, broccoli, pak choi, butternut squash



**Fruit** like apples, oranges, berries, mangoes



**Pulses** like beans, peas and lentils (only counts as 1 portion a day)



**Unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice** (only counts as a maximum of 1 of your 5 A DAY)

## The link between wholegrains, pulses, veg, fruit and cancer

- ▶ Diets rich in fibre (eg wholegrains, pulses, vegetables and fruit) can help protect against bowel cancer. This may be because fibre helps to move food more quickly through the bowel.
- ▶ There's evidence that vegetables and fruit can help protect against cancers of the mouth and throat and digestive tract.
- ▶ There is also strong evidence that eating a fibre-rich diet, high in wholegrains can help protect against weight gain, overweight and obesity. Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your cancer risk.



### Practical tips for fitting in your 5 A DAY

Eating five portions of vegetables and fruit a day may seem like a challenge. Here are some tips to help you succeed:

- ▶ **Breakfast boost.** Add chopped banana, berries or dried fruit to your cereal or porridge.
- ▶ **Stock up on canned or frozen fruit and veg.** You will always have them to hand and can buy them pre-cut for easier cooking. They also tend to be cheaper than fresh but are just as nutritious.
- ▶ **Bulk up your meal with veg.** If you're cooking soups, sauces, chilli, curries or stews from scratch, try adding more vegetables. You could also add beans or lentils.
- ▶ **Stir in spinach.** Add a large handful of spinach to a hot bowl of soup or stew. The heat is enough to cook it so it doesn't add to the cooking time or washing up.
- ▶ **Sunday roast.** Instead of potatoes, try roasting sweet potatoes, squash or parsnips in a little oil. Unlike potatoes, they count towards your 5 A DAY.
- ▶ **See what's in season.** Seasonal fruit and veg can often be cheaper and better for the environment.

Why not download our handy **5 A DAY portion** poster?  
Available at: [wcrf-uk.org/5ADAY](http://wcrf-uk.org/5ADAY)



# Cut down on red and processed meat

Meat, especially red meat, is often seen as the star of a meal but there are lots of good reasons for shifting the focus to eating more vegetables, fruit, pulses and wholegrains.

There is strong evidence that eating processed meat or too much red meat increases our risk of bowel cancer. Eating a lot of meat is also characteristic of a 'Western type' diet which our evidence shows is a cause of weight gain.

## What is processed meat?

This is meat that has been preserved by smoking, curing, salting or adding preservatives rather than having just been cooked or reformed. This includes bacon, salami, chorizo, corned beef, pepperoni, pastrami, hot dogs, ham, and most ready-to-buy sausages and burgers.

There is strong evidence that processed meat increases the risk of bowel cancer, so we recommend eating very little, if any. It also tends to be high in fat, especially saturated fat and salt.

## Why is some red meat OK?

Red meat (beef, pork, lamb and goat) can be a valuable source of nutrients including protein, iron and zinc. However, eating a varied diet that contains less red meat can still provide all the nutrients you need.

## Red meat – how much a week?

Here's an example of how you could have three meals a week containing red meat and still stick to less than 350g (cooked weight):

- ▶ **Spaghetti bolognese with minced beef**  
– **140g** (about 210g raw weight)
- ▶ **Small pork or lamb chop – 75g**  
(about 110g raw weight)
- ▶ **Roast beef, pork or lamb – 90g**  
(about 130g raw weight)

**Try to eat no more than 3 portions of red meat a week, which is about 350–500g cooked weight in total (or 525–750g raw weight), and eat little, if any processed meat to help protect yourself against bowel cancer**

## Why not try some of these alternatives?

- ▶ **Meat substitutes** – eg beans, tofu and Quorn
- ▶ **Poultry** – eg skinless chicken and turkey
- ▶ **Non-oily fish** – eg cod and canned tuna (in spring water)
- ▶ **Oily fish** – eg salmon, trout, sardines and mackerel
- ▶ **Eggs, dairy and dairy alternatives** – eg milk, yoghurt, cheese – opt for reduced-fat, unsweetened varieties
- ▶ **Nuts** – eg Brazil nuts and almonds



### Practical tips to cut down

- ▶ **Smaller portions** (about half the size of your hand) means you can have red meat more often.
- ▶ **Make red meat go further** by adding some beans, chickpeas or mushrooms to bulk up stews, chillies, curries and pasta sauces. They have a meaty texture and are just as filling.
- ▶ **Substitute beef mince for turkey or even vegetarian mince** – even if you do half and half, you'll cut calories and they're just as filling. Boost the flavour with onion, garlic, herbs and spices.
- ▶ **Use smoked paprika instead of chorizo** for the flavour kick in your cooking.
- ▶ **Keep some days red meat-free.**
- ▶ **Enjoy a full English breakfast, but as a treat.** Try to cut back on the bacon and add more grilled mushrooms, tomatoes and beans.
- ▶ **Rather than ham in your sandwiches, try hard-boiled eggs, canned tuna** (in spring water) or **low-fat soft cheese**. Add rocket or spring onion to lift the flavour.



# Small changes for a big difference

As well as eating more vegetables, fruit, pulses and wholegrains and cutting down on red and processed meat, there are lots of small changes you can make to what you eat that can make a big difference to your health.



## Plan in advance

Deciding what you're going to eat for the week ahead is a great way to avoid relying too much on takeaways and ready meals. It can also help you save money.

## Cut down on junk food

Processed foods may be tempting but eating too much of these high-calorie foods has been shown to be a cause of being overweight or obese. They also tend to be high in fat, starches and sugar, while being low in fibre.

Try avoiding eating too much chocolate, as well as pies, pastries, cakes, biscuits and crisps. Try also to cut down on fast food like fried chicken and pizzas.



## Trim the fat

Fat is high in calories. To cut down, try to:

- ▶ Choose **reduced-fat versions** of cheese, milk and yoghurt
- ▶ **Swap butter** for reduced-fat spread or low-fat soft cheese
- ▶ **Avoid pastry**, like pies
- ▶ **Measure out oil** with a teaspoon, or use an oil spray
- ▶ Opt for **reduced-fat** mayonnaise and salad dressings
- ▶ Choose **lean cuts of meat** and trim any visible fat



## Keep an eye on your portion sizes

Rather than automatically going back for seconds, allow a few minutes before deciding if you are still hungry.

Leftovers don't need to go to waste – most foods can be chilled and kept for lunch the next day.



Why not download our handy **What is a healthy portion size** poster? Available at: [wcrf-uk.org/portionsposter](http://wcrf-uk.org/portionsposter)



## A pinch less salt

The average man in England consumes 8.4g of salt a day – that's well above the recommended maximum of 6g a day.

Although the evidence linking added salt to stomach cancer has become less clear, we cannot rule out the link, and eating too much salt is linked to other health conditions. Therefore, we recommend consuming no more than 6g of salt a day – that's about one teaspoon.

As well as not adding salt when you are cooking or at the table, it is a good idea to check food labels. Bread, soups and breakfast cereals may contain more salt than you expect.



## Use healthy cooking techniques

Baking, steaming, boiling, stir-frying and even air-frying require little or no oil or butter and can be used to cook a variety of foods.



For lots of **nutritious and easy-to-make recipes**, why not have a look at the recipes on our website:

[wcrf-uk.org/recipes](http://wcrf-uk.org/recipes)

You can also **download or order a range of cookbooks for free**, from Light Bites to British Favourites – we have something for all:

[wcrf-uk.org/cookbooks](http://wcrf-uk.org/cookbooks)



# Think about what you drink

Whether it's a glass of wine with a meal or a pint of beer at the end of a busy day, for many of us, drinking alcohol can become a normal part of day-to-day life. While the immediate effects of drinking alcohol are obvious, we often don't think about the longer-term impact on our health.

There is strong scientific evidence that drinking any type of alcoholic drink can increase your risk of mouth and throat, oesophageal, bowel, stomach and liver cancer. Alcohol is particularly harmful when combined with smoking for some cancer types.

To reduce your cancer risk, we **recommend not drinking alcohol at all**. If you do choose to drink alcohol, follow national guidelines. In the UK, the recommendation is to drink no more than 14 units a week, spread over at least three days. And remember, no alcoholic drink is healthy.

## Alcohol and weight gain

Alcoholic drinks are surprisingly high in calories and offer few of the healthy nutrients your body needs.

**A pint of beer**  
(4% alcohol)  
**contains about**  
**170 calories**

**– similar to a bag of crisps.**



**A large (250ml) glass of**  
**wine (8–13% alcohol) contains**  
**about 190 calories**

**– similar to three**  
**bourbon biscuits.**



## What is a unit?

One unit contains 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol.

**One bottle of**  
**lager/beer/**  
**cider (330ml,**  
**5% ABV) is**  
**1.7 units**



**One 25ml measure**  
**of spirits (40% ABV)**  
such as gin  
or whisky is  
**1 unit**



**One small**  
(125ml)  
**glass of wine**  
(12% ABV) is  
**1.5 units**



To find out how many calories are in other alcoholic drinks, visit:

[wcrf-uk.org/alcohol-calculator](http://wcrf-uk.org/alcohol-calculator)





## Swap soft drinks

It is easy to forget that soft drinks contain calories too. Sugary soft drinks – such as cola, lemonade, energy drinks, and juices – can contribute to weight gain if drunk regularly. They are easy to drink in large quantities without making you feel full.

Unsweetened fruit juice is a good source of certain nutrients, but also contains a lot of naturally-occurring sugar so it is best not to drink more than one small glass (150ml) a day.

Alternatively, you can swap sugary drinks for water, lower calorie alternatives like low-calorie soft drinks, or unsweetened tea and coffee with a small amount of milk.

**Did you know?** A 500ml bottle of cola contains almost 13 teaspoons of sugar



### How can I drink less alcohol?

- ▶ **Sip your drink** – avoid drinking too quickly.
- ▶ **Order small measures** – double measures may seem good value but can result in you drinking more.
- ▶ **Finish your drink before topping up your glass** – this will help you to keep track of how much you drink.
- ▶ **Alternate alcoholic drinks** with water or non-alcoholic drinks.
- ▶ **Avoid eating salty snacks** – they can make you thirsty and encourage you to drink more.
- ▶ **Keep a few days every week alcohol-free.**
- ▶ **Dilute your drinks** – for example, add low-calorie tonic water to a single measure of spirits.
- ▶ **Don't hold on to your glass** – put your glass down when you're sitting or standing in one place.

If you need help cutting down on the amount of alcohol you drink, your doctor can provide advice and support.



# Ready for change?

Now you've seen what changes you can make to your diet and lifestyle to benefit your health and help to reduce your cancer risk, we hope you feel inspired to start making a few small changes to your lifestyle.

Visit our website [wcrf-uk.org](http://wcrf-uk.org) for more tips and recipes to help you make your healthy changes stick.

## General diet and lifestyle information

- ▶ For **general healthy living information**, visit [www.nhs.uk/livewell](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell)
- ▶ For further information on **getting more active**, visit [www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise)
- ▶ To find information on **NHS Cancer Screening Programmes**, visit [www.gov.uk/topic/population-screening-programmes](http://www.gov.uk/topic/population-screening-programmes)
- ▶ For information on the **detection and treatment of cancer** contact **Macmillan Cancer Support**. Visit their website [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk) or call **0808 808 0000**.
- ▶ For any concerns about **alcohol and drinking or to get support**, visit [www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support) or call **Drinkline** (a free national helpline) on **0300 123 1110**.



World Cancer Research Fund's healthy eating and lifestyle information is aimed at the general adult population and is not intended to influence individuals who are following special diets (on medical advice) or who have special dietary or exercise needs.

The information contained in our health information publications relate to the prevention of cancer. We are unable to give medical advice. For specific advice, please consult your doctor.

# Cancer Prevention Recommendations



## **Be a healthy weight**

Keep your weight within the healthy range and avoid weight gain in adult life



## **Be physically active**

Be physically active as part of everyday life – walk more and sit less



## **Eat a diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans**

Make wholegrains, vegetables, fruit, and pulses (legumes) such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet



## **Limit consumption of 'fast foods' and other processed foods high in fat, starches or sugars**

Limiting these foods helps control calorie intake and maintain a healthy weight



## **Limit consumption of red and processed meat**

Eat no more than moderate amounts of red meat, such as beef, pork and lamb. Eat little, if any, processed meat



## **Limit consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks**

Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks



## **Limit alcohol consumption**

For cancer prevention, it's best not to drink alcohol



## **Do not use supplements for cancer prevention**

Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone



## **For mothers: breastfeed your baby, if you can**

Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby



## **After a cancer diagnosis: follow our Recommendations, if you can**

Check with your health professional what is right for you

**Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk.**

**Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.**

# About World Cancer Research Fund

World Cancer Research Fund is one of the world's leading cancer prevention charities, and the only UK charity solely dedicated to funding life-changing research into the prevention and survival of cancer through diet and lifestyle

We know that around four in ten – or 40 per cent – of cancer cases are preventable. That's around 155,000 people every year in the UK. Our vision is that preventable cancers in the UK are halved by 2050. By following our Cancer Prevention Recommendations, choosing not to smoke (or giving up smoking) and being safe in the sun, you will have the best chance of living a life free from the disease. Find out more: [wcrf-uk.org/our-research](https://wcrf-uk.org/our-research)

**Will you help us build a world where fewer people every day get preventable cancers?** Our work is funded solely by charitable donations. Your support will help us continue providing easy-to-access health information to help people reduce their risk of cancer: [wcrf-uk.org/donate](https://wcrf-uk.org/donate)



We're always looking for ways to improve the information we provide. If you have any comments or suggestions about any aspect of this guide or our other health information, or for any enquiries or to request the information in large print, please contact us at [resources@wcrf.org](mailto:resources@wcrf.org)

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