

Reducing your risk of cancer involves making healthy lifestyle choices and being proactive about screening and early detection

This information is intended for general information only and should not replace consultation with healthcare professionals. Consult a qualified healthcare professional before making medical decisions or if you have questions about your individual medical situation.

Screening for BREAST CANCER

Mammography and clinical breast examinations are the most reliable methods of finding breast cancer. Consider doing breast self-examination to help you learn what is normal for you so that you will be able to notice changes. You are looking for changes in your breasts. First, you need to learn what is normal for your breasts. It may be normal for your breasts to feel a bit lumpy. You should check for any new place in your breast that feels thicker or harder than the rest of your breast. Report any changes you find to your doctor. To order a free breast self-examination shower card, call 1 888 939-3333.

- Have a clinical breast examination by a trained health professional at least every two years if you are over the age of 40.
- Have a mammogram every two years if you are between the ages of 50 and 69.
- If you have a family history of breast cancer, you should discuss this with your doctor and your need for testing.

Screening for CERVICAL CANCER

Pap tests are recommended every year for the first 3 years after you become sexually active. If the first 3 tests are normal the Pap test is repeated at least every 2 years until age 70. Even if you have stopped having sex, you should continue to have the tests. Condoms are known to reduce the risk of a number of sexually transmitted infections but they may not protect against human papilloma virus (HPV) which is a risk factor of cervical cancer. If you have a family history of cervical cancer, you should discuss this with your doctor and your need for testing.

Screening for TESTICULAR CANCER

Performing testicular self-examination (TSE) regularly helps you learn what is normal for your testicles so that you will be able to notice changes. See your doctor if you notice anything unusual or need help learning self-examination. All men should perform a TSE regularly from the time they are 15 years old. If you have a family history of testicular cancer, you should discuss this with your doctor your need for testing.

Screening for PROSTATE CANCER

If you are 50 or older, it's time to talk with your doctor about the potential benefits and risks of screening for prostate cancer using Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) and digital rectal examinations (DRE).

If you have a personal or family history of prostate cancer, you should discuss with your doctor the need for testing at an earlier age and continue to be regularly tested by your doctor.

Screening for COLORECTAL CANCER

Both men and women should also discuss screening for colon and rectal cancers.

The Canadian Cancer Society recommends that men and women age 50 and over have a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) at least every 2 years. FOBT blood testing helps identify polyps early before they become cancerous. If you have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, you should discuss with your doctor the need for testing at an earlier age than 50.