



April 6th, 2015

Reducing Your Cancer Risk!

Living a Long and Healthy Life

According to the Canadian Cancer Society about 191,000 Canadians develop cancer in a given year and death due to cancer remains the leading cause of death amongst Canadians. Many people blame cancer rates on the fact that people are living longer, increasing the likelihood of living long enough to develop cancer – but that isn't the whole story. We may be living longer but many cancers are the result of how we're living! For example, meat consumption, much lower in generations past, is associated with several cancers, including breast, uterine, kidney, ovarian, pancreatic, prostate, testicular, and thyroid, and with multiple myeloma.

Increased BMI = Increased Cancer Risk

Body Mass Index (BMI) has received a lot of bad press for its accuracy in defining health, but it has been proven to be one of the best measures we can make in specific situations. Researchers in the UK conducted a huge study (more than 5 million people) to evaluate the relationship between BMI and cancer and found that increased BMI corresponded with increased cancer rates for 17 different cancers! The worst was uterine - a 62% increase for each 5-pt increase in BMI.

Exercise Reduces Breast Cancer Risk

Get moving to reduce your breast cancer risk! Researchers in France examined the effect of exercise on breast cancer incidence and found that it's never too late to start exercising and reap the benefits. They analyzed data for almost 60,000 women over a 13 year period and found that "easy" exercise, such as brisk walking for 30 minutes daily, reduced breast cancer risk by 10%. Given the other health benefits of walking, it's just one more reason to start!

A Dozen Things to Reduce Your Cancer Risk

The International Agency for Research on Cancer, a branch of the WHO, has come out with its top 12 things people can do to reduce their risk of cancer. Number one is avoiding tobacco, followed closely by being a healthy weight (via diet and exercise) and limiting sun and alcohol exposure. Also on the list? The benefits of breast-feeding, reducing radon exposure, Hepatitis B and HPV vaccination and participating in early cancer detection screenings.

Cancer has been identified as the number one health fear, but, in most cases, there is much that can be done to reduce risk and treat it. Learning facts and taking action can reduce that fear. Talk to your pharmacist about what you should know and what you can do to live a healthier life. And, know that we're slowly winning the battle!