

Body Awareness

Signs and symptoms to look for:

- Unexplained weight loss or tiredness
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Increasingly out of breath
- A cough or croaky voice that lasts longer than 3 weeks
- Unexplained persistent pain or ache
- A change in the size, shape or colour of a mole
- Unusual lump or swelling anywhere
- A change to bowel motions that lasts longer than 6 weeks
- Blood in your bowel motions
- Blood in your urine
- Problems passing urine
- Unusual changes to the breast e.g. a lump, pain/discomfort, dimpling of the skin, veins becoming more visible, changes in size/shape, nipple discharge, inverted nipple, rash.

The symptoms outlined in this leaflet are often caused by something less serious and don't usually mean it's cancer. However, finding cancer early makes it more treatable and a trip to your doctor could save your life. So if in doubt get it checked out. If it's not serious, your mind will be put at rest. You certainly won't be wasting anyone's time.

If you have any concerns about cancer you can talk to one of our specialist nurses on the Cancer Focus NI free information and support NurseLine

0800 783 3339

Monday to Friday 9am - 1pm
Calls are free from a landline
nurseline@cancerfocusni.org



Cancer Focus Northern Ireland
40-44 Eglantine Avenue
Belfast BT9 6DX

T: 028 9066 3281
E: behealthy@cancerfocusni.org
www.cancerfocusni.org

Charity No: NIC 101307



Printed July 2018



**Focus on
Women's
Health**

Every year, over 6,000 women are diagnosed with cancer in Northern Ireland. Approximately 1,600 of these are the less serious non malignant skin cancers. But remember, almost half of all cancers can be prevented through a healthier lifestyle

The 3 most common cancers in women:

Breast

Over 1,300 women are diagnosed each year. It is important that women are breast aware at any age, and, if you are aged between 50 and 70 attend screening appointments when invited. If you are over 70 you are still at risk of breast cancer and can book an appointment at your local breast screening unit. If you notice any unusual changes in your breast please see your GP.

Lung

Approximately 600 women are diagnosed with lung cancer each year. Tobacco is the major cause - linked to an estimated 86% of lung cancers.

Bowel

Approximately 530 women are diagnosed each year. If you are aged between 60 and 74 please use the bowel testing kit when it is sent to your home as part of the bowel screening programme.



Some simple tips include:

Healthy Weight

Keeping to a healthy weight is one of the most important things you can do to lower your risk of cancer.

Healthy Diet

- Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day - these can be fresh, frozen, canned, cooked or raw
- Eat more fibre - switch to brown bread, wholemeal pasta, brown rice rather than white
- High salt intake is linked to stomach cancer so aim for under 6g per day
- Eat less red meat (beef, pork, lamb) and avoid processed meat such as sausages, bacon and salami
- Cut back on foods high in fat and sugar

Physical Activity

Exercise lowers your risk of bowel, breast and womb cancer and helps us maintain a healthy weight. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity weekly (e.g. walking, gardening, golf) or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity weekly (sport, running, circuits). For cancer prevention, the more physical activity you do the better. But any amount is better than none at all.



Care in the Sun

Even in Northern Ireland you can get skin cancer from the sun, especially if you play sports or work outside.

Follow this simple advice:

- Wear a T-shirt and hat
- Stay in the shade from 11am to 3pm
- Use SPF15+ sunscreen and UVA 4 or 5 star
- Keep an eye on moles. If you notice any change in colour, shape or size, tell your doctor.
- Avoid sunbeds
- www.careinthesun.org

Alcohol

If you drink alcohol of any type, limit your intake. Not drinking alcohol is better for cancer prevention. Drinking alcohol can increase the risk of at least seven types of cancer, including those of the mouth, gullet, throat, liver, bowel and breast.

Smoking

The best thing you can do for your health is to stop smoking.

Top tips for stopping:

- Get free professional stop smoking support
- Pick a quit date and stick to it
- Use stop smoking aids e.g. gum, patches, tablets
- Make a list of all the reasons why you want/need to stop smoking
- Avoid second hand smoke
- For help to stop smoking go to www.want2stop.info

Chemicals

Always read and practise health and safety guidelines. Some chemicals may cause cancer if you breathe them in or get them on your skin.