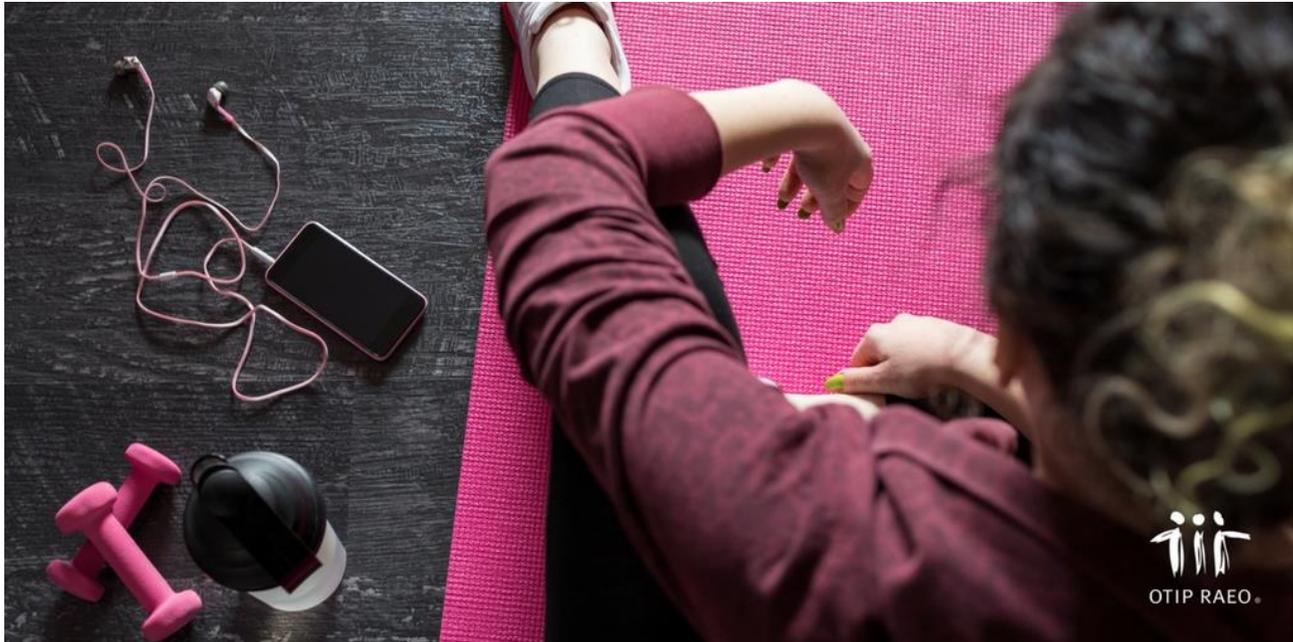


Physical Activity and Cancer Prevention



It's an unsettling number. Nearly one in two Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives, and one in four Canadians will die from it.

This is according to the 2017 edition of the Canadian Cancer Society's annual report on Canadian Cancer Statistics. While those numbers are certainly scary, the organization reports that the good news is that almost half of all cancer cases can be prevented.

Like heart disease, many Canadians are genetically predisposed to certain cancers, meaning your chances of developing certain cancers are higher if they run in your family. However, prevention is still crucial.

Here are some of the ways that you can prevent cancer from affecting you in your lifetime.

Get Physically Active

Physical fitness isn't just about looking good, it's about helping your body to

function optimally. Studies have shown that being active is proven to protect you from developing certain cancers, such as colon cancer.

Fitness is also a powerful tool to help you maintain or achieve your optimal weight. Since obesity is linked to a greater risk of developing certain cancers such as breast cancer, colon and rectum cancer, kidney cancer, pancreas cancer and uterus cancer, working to reduce your weight is a powerful way to reduce your cancer risk. Just 30 minutes a day can make a big difference.

The Canadian Cancer Society says one third of all cancers can be prevented by being active, eating well and maintaining an optimal body weight. Don't just focus on how you're moving your body, but also what you're putting into your body as well. Nutrition matters.

Quit Smoking

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in Canada, surpassing deaths from breast, colorectal and prostate cancers combined, Lung Cancer Canada [reports](#). One in 12 men and one in 13 women will be diagnosed with lung cancer in their lifetime.

Smoking, the foundation said, is “the single most preventable cause of cancer.” It is directly responsible for 85% of all lung cancer cases.

This is why insurance companies penalize smokers, as smoking is linked to so many health problems including lung cancer and other conditions. The good news is health benefits start to improve upon quitting smoking. After five years, your risk of developing lung cancer decreases by 30-60%. After 20 years, it is as though you never smoked at all. As a bonus, once you've been smoke-free for a year, most insurers usually drop the smoking penalties.

Limit Alcohol Consumption

Like smoking, alcohol consumption is also linked to many different types of cancer as it is considered a carcinogen, the Breast Cancer Society of Canada [reports](#).

Although alcohol is commonly and rightfully associated with liver cancer, it's also linked to colon and rectum cancer, esophagus cancer, larynx (voice box), mouth and pharynx (throat) cancer, as well as breast cancer.

New research has found alcohol consumption may contribute to 4% of new breast cancer cases in the country, while drinking just one standard drink a day (a glass of wine, for example) increases a woman's risk of developing breast cancer by up to 13%.

Get Your Annual Check-Up

Getting your regular check-up and corresponding tests is not only useful for cancer prevention, but also for early detection. The earlier a cancer is detected, the more likely your chance of survival.

This becomes especially important after the age of 50. Ninety per cent of Canadians diagnosed with cancer are over the age of 50.

Even before that, routine checks such as pap smears and HPV (human papillomavirus) tests, can identify any abnormalities that contribute to developing cervical cancers when not detected.

A Healthier Life Equals A Healthier Body

The healthier you are, the lower your risk of developing cancer and other conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. With cancer affecting so many Canadians, why increase your chances of being one of them by continuing to partake in unhealthy habits and activities? A healthier life is a longer life.

We all know someone touched by cancer. There is help. CAREpath, a unique cancer assistance program, is available to eligible OTIP plan members at no extra cost. Beginning from the time of diagnosis, throughout treatments and beyond, your oncology nurse is there to help you on your road to recovery, ensuring you receive the best care possible, every step of the way. Visit otip.carepath.ca for more information.