Reducing Your Risk for Cancer

Rev. Percy McCray
Health, Hope & Inspiration is a weekly radio broadcast, sponsored by Cancer Treatment Centers of America®(CTCA), designed to help people find answers to questions about cancer, cancer prevention and overall healthy living. One of the greatest gifts a person can enjoy is good health. A well-rounded lifestyle is the product of physical, emotional and spiritual health. These three things are interdependent, and that is the message of Health, Hope & Inspiration, as well as the basis of the integrative approach at CTCA®.

For more information, visit our website at www.HealthHopeAndInspiration.com.
The human body is uniquely created with the ability to heal itself. When there is a proper balance between body, mind and spirit, we can promote good health. While there is a wealth of information available about cancer prevention, the varied opinions on the subject can be confusing and sometimes conflicting. What is generally accepted is that a person’s chance of developing cancer is impacted by their lifestyle choices.
While this sounds obvious, getting exercise doesn’t need to be intense. Any kind of aerobic activity which boosts your heart rate provides health benefits, and it’s easier than you realize. The goal is to keep your body moving for at least 30 minutes a day. Find an activity you enjoy, for example:

- Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight
- Walking (at the track, mall, grocery store)
- Life activities (laundry, housework, gardening, etc.)
- Sports
- Exercise classes (yoga, spinning, etc.)

Get active.
Guard your immune system.

A strong immune system keeps you healthy, and is critical when fighting invading toxins and damaged cells in your body. Proper care and support will augment your body’s ability to heal. You can keep your immune system balanced by doing the following:

- Eat clean (fruits, grains, vegetables, proteins).
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water.
- Get a good night’s rest. Maintain a regular bedtime.
- Laugh (a lot)!
Every day, we encounter toxins and other unhealthy substances. It is impossible to avoid them completely. Stress, if left unchecked, can also act as a toxin and create a variety of health issues. Learning to manage and release stress will provide another layer of defense in your arsenal of good health. Consider these ways to help you manage or release stress in your life:

- Pray and learn to let go of what you can’t change.
- Laugh.
- Don’t bottle it up. Talk with someone you trust.
- Go for a walk. Fresh air can bring clarity to a situation.

Monitor and manage your stress levels.
Maintain a balanced diet.

Although making healthy selections at the grocery store or at mealtime can’t guarantee cancer prevention, it may help reduce your risk. And the good news is that you don’t have to cut out your favorite foods—simply eat them in moderation. Here are some simple ways to make a change:

- Lower or eliminate your intake of sugary or processed foods.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, as well as other foods from plants.
- Drink lots of water (bottled or sparkling—avoid ones with added sugar).
- Enjoy your coffee or tea, but monitor your caffeine intake.
- Try eating more often throughout the day, but in smaller portions.

To maintain a healthy lifestyle, moderation is key. You won’t do everything perfectly. That’s okay. Incorporating the suggestions in this resource can make a positive impact in your overall health. If you are unsure about what is healthy for you, be sure to consult with your doctor. You may inspire someone else in the process!

Not to be construed as medical advice – you should check with your physician before starting a diet and exercise program.
Rev. Percy McCray Jr. has spent more than 20 years ministering to cancer patients and their caregivers at Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA).

He recognizes cancer care ministry as a special calling from God and considers faith a key, but often overlooked, component of cancer treatment. He now serves as the Director of Faith-Based Programs at CTCA® and provides leadership to the pastoral care staff at all five CTCA hospitals. In addition, Rev. McCray oversees Our Journey of Hope®, a nationwide cancer-care ministry training and support program.

An ordained minister, Rev. McCray is a member of the U.S. Chaplain Association. He has been recognized as one of the “most influential African Americans in Lake County (IL)” by the Chicago People’s Voice newspaper for his religious and leadership roles within the community.
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