

Can these 4 things reduce your cancer risk?

If someone told you that you could do four things to dramatically lower your risk of developing cancer, would you believe them? While some doubt that lifestyle changes can have a large effect on overall risk, a recent study suggests otherwise. The research published by JAMA Oncology says that 20 percent to 40 percent of cancer cases—and about 50 percent of all deaths from cancer—could be prevented if people did four things, namely exercise regularly, maintain a healthy BMI, not smoke, and drink alcohol only in moderation.

Researchers examined more than 130,000 participants. They divided the participants in two groups: the first, healthier group, was considered “low risk” and the second group was “high risk.” Researchers looked at how likely the participants in each group were to develop certain cancers.

They found that the low-risk group was less likely to develop and die from cancers. This group had the following common characteristics:

- They didn't smoke.
- They didn't drink, or drank in moderation.
- They had a healthy weight.
- They exercised regularly – either exercised vigorously for 75 minutes a week or did 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise.

“There are some cancer risk factors that are not in our control, such as age, family history or having previous biopsies,” says Dr. Heidi Memmel, a breast surgeon at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge. “But there are several factors that we can control. For example, being overweight or obese, smoking and alcohol use can increase your risk of breast cancer, while diet and exercise can reduce it.”

This is not news! We have heard about the importance of these simple lifestyle choices for years—eat well, exercise, get enough sleep, reduce stress, make time for spiritual practice or meditation. But it really works! Daily choices to nurture our bodies protect us from cancer and many other health issues.

Prayer: Dear God, give us love for our bodies and help us embrace the choices that nourish them. Amen.

Wishing you joy and good health,
Mary Bohlen RN
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Blood pressure readings have resumed. See us in the Infant & Toddler Room in the rear of church on the 1st and 3rd full weekends of every month September – May.

The service is free of charge and currently is limited to those Masses that have a volunteer to perform readings. If you are trained in taking blood pressures and would like to offer your services, please contact Mary Bohlen using the e-mail address listed above we'd love to have you on the team!