

Irish Cancer Prevention Network



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scaghástála
National Screening Service

Newsletter July 2023

Welcome to the Irish Cancer Prevention Network (ICPN) newsletter. This quarterly newsletter shares cancer prevention facts and initiatives.

You can contact the ICPN at prevention@cancercontrol.ie to share your cancer prevention initiatives.

ICPN Steps to Reduce your Cancer Risk: Facts

Each individual person's risk of getting cancer is influenced by a wide range of factors. These include things that we can't change (like our age and genetics) and things that we can change (like what we eat, whether we drink alcohol, exercise, and protect our skin from the sun).

However, **we can all take steps to reduce our risk of cancer.**

The ICPN Steps to reduce your cancer risk poster can be downloaded [here](#).

Steps to reduce your cancer risk: Skin protection

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Ireland with almost 13,000 cases diagnosed annually¹. The number of people being diagnosed with skin cancer in Ireland is rising rapidly². Yet skin cancer is largely preventable by protecting skin from UV rays.

Protecting your skin from the sun whether at home or abroad can reduce your risk of skin cancer. Be prepared. Follow the Healthy Ireland SunSmart 5 S's to protect your skin:

- **Slip** on clothing that covers your skin such as long sleeves, collared t-shirts;
- **Slop** on broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen on exposed skin, using factor 30+ for adults and 50+ for children. Reapply regularly;
- **Slap** on a wide-brimmed hat;
- **Seek** shade – especially if outdoors between 11am and 3pm – and always use a sunshade on a child's buggy;
- **Slide** on sunglasses to protect your eyes.

As well as the 5 S's it is important to remember to not deliberately try to get a suntan. Avoid getting a sunburn. Never use a sunbed.

Make sun protection part of your daily routine, especially from April to September, even when it is cloudy. No sunscreen can provide 100% protection, it should be used alongside other protective measures such as clothing and shade.

For more information and resources visit the HSE SunSmart hub www.hse.ie/SunSmart.

The Met Éireann Podcast – The Sun and Our Skin

Dr Barbara McGrogan and Dr Triona McCarthy of the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) discuss the role of sunlight and UV radiation in skin damage, skin cancer and how best to protect ourselves. For more information about the podcast and links to listen to the podcast are available by [clicking here](#).

GAA Cúl Camps partnering with SunSmart campaign

The HSE's National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) and Healthy Ireland have teamed up with Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps to support the Healthy Ireland SunSmart campaign. As part of this campaign, Kellogg's GAA Cúl Camps coaches are being taught about skin cancer prevention and how to introduce the SunSmart 5 S's to children in a fun way. The coaches can then act as positive role models for children attending the camps and encourage them to protect their skin by following the SunSmart 5 S's when outside.

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to the damaging effects of the sun's UV rays. When children are taking part in sports or playing and spending time outdoors, it is important to protect their skin. If a child is badly sunburned more than 3 times before the age of 20, their risk of skin cancer as an adult more than doubles³.



SunSmart Toolbox Talk for Outdoor Workers available

The SunSmart Toolbox Talk for Outdoor Workers is now available to order. The SunSmart Toolbox Talk provides basic information for outdoor workers about the health risks of UV radiation and the importance of protecting the skin and eyes from UV radiation. The Toolbox Talk includes a facilitator pack, with everything you will need to deliver a SunSmart Toolbox talk, including:

- An educational video,
- A patient advocate sharing their skin cancer story,
- A worksheet,
- Posters on prevention and early detection of skin cancer,
- An FAQ sheet for facilitators,
- Feedback form for facilitators.

A copy of the SunSmart Toolbox Talk pack can be ordered by completing the form on the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TFXV2FN>.

Cancer Prevention Initiatives

The HSE's NCCP provides a free e-learning programme on 'Reducing Cancer Risk' for health and social care professionals. The programme consists of 11 short modules on modifiable cancer risk factors. Each module takes approximately 10-15mins to complete. Development of the eLearning programme was led by the NCCP team with support from subject matter experts from HSE clinical teams.

With National Breastfeeding Week (1-7th August) approaching, now is a good time to complete the **Reducing cancer risk: Breastfeeding, hormonal contraceptives and HRT module**. This module was developed for the Irish context and provides information on:

- How breastfeeding, hormonal contraception and HRT each affect cancer risk,
- What cancers are related to each risk factor,
- Cancer risk reduction advice,
- Signposts to supports and further trusted sources of information.

Visit www.hseland.ie and search for 'Reducing Cancer Risk' to access all 11 modules including 'Reducing cancer risk: Breastfeeding, hormonal contraceptives and HRT module'.

Choose Screening, the National Screening Service 5-year Strategic Plan

On 26 April, Minister Hildegarde Naughton with Fiona Murphy, Chief Executive of the National Screening Services' (NSS) launched the NSS's first Strategic Plan, *Choose Screening: Together we can make a difference*. The Strategy focuses on the breadth of service

NSS will deliver over the next five years as part of Ireland's national healthcare system. Putting people at the centre of the work of the NSS and collaborating with stakeholders are themes that run through the strategy. The event was attended by representatives of the 221+ Patient Support Group, the Marie Keating Foundation, the Irish Cancer Society, the Irish Institute of Pharmacy, the Irish Pharmacy Union, and officials from the Department of Health, and HSE colleagues. You can read more about the launch [here](#).



HSE's Talking Health and Wellbeing Podcast - #ChooseScreening

National Screening Service (NSS) Chief Executive Fiona Murphy, and Patient and Public Partnership representative Grace Rattigan, were interviewed for the HSE's Talking Health & Wellbeing podcast that went live on 8th June.

The podcast episode, #ChooseScreening, focused on the significance of NSS's person-centred approach in developing and implementing its new strategy, Choose Screening and how they aim to ensure that people can access the right information to enable them to make an informed choice to participate in screening.

The NSS has published a blog about the podcast which you can read here: [New podcast highlights strength in person-centred approach at the National Screening Service](#). For more information [click here](#).



Cancer Prevention Research

The NSS is researching the potential role of self-sampling in cervical screening. They began planning the research in 2022, and the results will be available this autumn. The research advisory group is working with a market research company on a population survey to understand what people eligible for cervical screening in Ireland think about self-sampling. They are particularly interested in finding out if self-sampling would appeal to under-screened and never-screened women and people with a cervix in Ireland. Read more about the research project [here](#).

Cancer Warnings on All Alcoholic Beverages

Labels on alcohol products under [Section 12 of the Public Health \(Alcohol\) Act](#) has been approved by the European Commission of draft regulations. The introduction of labels on alcohol products is part of Ireland's Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018, a policy response to the harms caused by alcohol in Ireland. Ireland has already introduced Minimum Unit Pricing as part of the act.

The introduction of labels on alcohol products is a way of increasing our awareness of how alcohol affects our health. The labels will help people to know more about the alcohol they are buying and consuming. Because alcohol has the potential to cause harm, even at low levels, people need to be aware of this information. If people know the facts, they can then make an informed choice.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) states that alcohol is classified as carcinogenic (cancer causing) to humans⁴. Drinking alcohol increases the risk of at least 7 types of cancer. A person can reduce their risk of cancer by not drinking alcohol.

The labelling regulations provide for a link to the HSE's website, www.askaboutalcohol.ie, which will ensure that the public are signposted to an independent and trusted source of information on alcohol-related harm. For more information on alcohol labelling [click here](#).

Publications

- The National Cancer Registry of Ireland (NCRI): COVID-19 impact on cancer incidence in Ireland in 2021: a preliminary analysis full report available [here](#). Infographic on key findings available [here](#).
- NCRI have also developed a range of infographics on [Bowel Cancer](#); [Cervical Cancer](#) and [Prostate Cancer](#).
- National Screening Service: Public Health Team Activity Report 2022 available [here](#).
- National Screening Service: Working to reduce inequality in screening available [here](#).

Cancer Risk Reduction Awareness Dates for your Diary

- World Head and Neck Cancer Day – 27th July
- World Breastfeeding Week – 1st-7th August
- Urology Awareness Month – September
- Mouth Cancer Awareness Day – 15th September
- European Week of Sport 23rd – 30th September
- National Walking Day – 24th September
- World Cancer Research Day – 24th September

References

1. National Cancer Registry of Ireland. (2022). Cancer in Ireland 1994-2020: Annual statistical report 2022. www.ncri.ie
2. National Cancer Registry of Ireland. (2019). Cancer incidence projections for Ireland 2020-2045. www.ncri.ie
3. Markovic, S. N., Erickson, L. A., Rao, R. D., Weenig, R. H., et. al. (2007). Malignant melanoma in the 21st century, part 1: epidemiology, risk factors, screening, prevention, and diagnosis. Mayo Clinic proceedings, 82(3), 364–380. <https://doi.org/10.4065/82.3.364>
4. International Agency for Research on Cancer. (2010). Alcohol Consumption and Ethyl Carbamate IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans Volume 96. Lyon: IARC.

A continued focus on cancer prevention is essential to reduce the serious impact of cancer on the lives of thousands of people in Ireland.

The ICPN provides an avenue to collaborate and identify opportunities to work together to prevent cancer for current and future generations. We aim to support implementation of the National Cancer Strategy's cancer prevention recommendations.

Visit www.hse.ie/cancerprevention for more information and resources.

Please contact the ICPN for support with your cancer prevention ideas, initiatives or research at prevention@cancercontrol.ie