Irish Cancer Prevention Network

Marie Keating FOUNDATION | breakthrough CANCER RESEARCH | nccp National Cancer Control Programme | Irish Cancer Society | IRISH SKIN FOUNDATION | An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála National Screening Service

Newsletter September 2021

Welcome to the Irish Cancer Prevention Network (ICPN) newsletter. This quarterly newsletter shares with you 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 person's risk of getting cancer is influenced by a wide range of factors. Things that we can't change (like our age and genetics) and things that we can change (like whether we drink alcohol, exercise, and protect our skin from the sun).

Unfortunately, because of the impact of factors that we cannot change, people will get cancer. However, **we can all take steps to reduce our risk of cancer.**

Positive Ageing

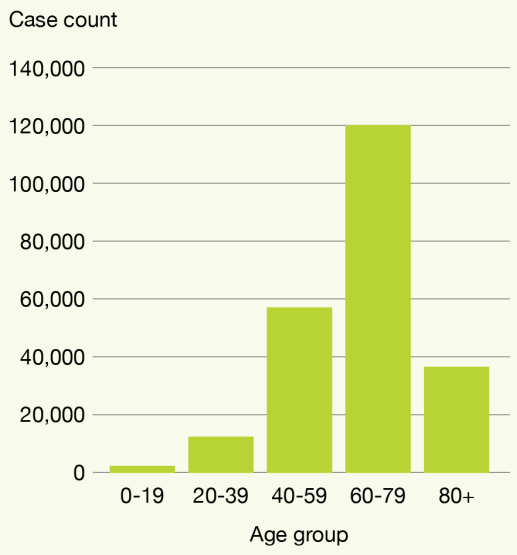
Positive Aging week runs from the 27th September – 1st October 2021.

Cancer can develop at any age, but as we get older our risk of cancer increases. There is evidence to suggest that DNA damage can accumulate in our cells as we age, increasing our risk of cancer.

Seven out of every 10 (69%) new cancer diagnoses in Ireland from 2007-2017 were in people aged 60 and over[1].

We cannot control our age, but lifestyle choices can reduce our risk of cancer no matter what age we are.

Cancer incidence in Ireland 2007-2017



1. https://www.ncri.ie/data/incidence-statistics

How to reduce risk of cancer as we age

- Smoking increases the risk of at least 15 types of cancer. Exposure to second hand smoke also increases risk. **Quitting at any age reduces cancer risk for yourself and the people around you.** For support to quit go to www.quit.ie or call 1800 201 203

- Alcohol increases the risk of at least 7 types of cancer, including breast cancer. **Choosing to cut down our alcohol consumption or stop drinking alcohol altogether will reduce our cancer risk, whatever age we are.** There is no 'safe' amount of alcohol – the less alcohol we drink, the more we reduce our cancer risk. For cancer prevention, it is best not to drink alcohol at all.

- **Physical activity reduces the risk of breast, endometrial and bowel cancer.** There are lots of options for getting active, like gardening, dancing, walking. Find something you enjoy. Click here to do some exercise at home with the HSE exercise videos.

- **Food fuels our bodies, helps us to maintain a healthy weight and helps reduce our cancer risk.** Eating fruit, vegetables and wholegrains provide the body with antioxidants, vitamins and minerals that reduce cell damage and cancer risk. Red and processed meats contain chemicals that increase risk of bowel cancer. Aim to eat no more than 3 portions of red meat a week and avoid processed meat altogether if you can. Watch the ICPN webinar on 'Food for thought: Eating to reduce cancer risk' by clicking here to learn more.

- **Most skin cancers could be prevented by protecting skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation.** UV is emitted naturally from the sun and also comes from artificial sources such as sunbeds. UV skin damage can be prevented by following the simple Healthy Ireland SunSmart 5 S's. For more information visit www.hse.ie/sunsmart

- **Cancer Screening programmes can either help identify the risk of developing cancer or pick it up at a stage where there are more treatment options available.** There are 3 cancer screening programmes in Ireland

  – BreastCheck**:** invites all women between the ages of 50 and 69 to have a mammogram (breast x-ray) every 2 years.

  – BowelScreen invites all people between the ages of 60 and 69 to have a bowel screening test every 2 years.

  – CervicalCheck invites women and people with a cervix between the ages of 25 and 29 every 3 years and aged 30-65 every 5 years.

  Screening will not pick up all signs of cancer. Cancer can occur at any time before screening, between screening appointments and after screening. If a person has any concerns or symptoms, you should contact your GP without delay, even if you recently had a normal screening test or are due for screening soon.

We know that our risk of cancer increases as we age. **If we do develop cancer, it is important that it is picked up as early as possible**, before it has grown bigger or spread to other parts of the body. Detecting cancer at an early stage means that we are more likely to survive cancer.

Be aware of the early signs and symptoms of cancer and always call your GP without delay if you notice anything unusual for you.

Call your GP TODAY if you notice any of the following

A new lump/bump

A changing lump/bump

Abnormal bleeding

A new or changing mole

Unexplained weight loss

Constantly tired

Persistent cough for more than 3 weeks

Persistent change in bowel habit

Persistent heartburn or indigestion

Cancer Prevention Initiatives

Positive Aging Webinar

The ICPN will host a lunch time webinar 'Aging Well: How to reduce your Cancer Risk' on Wednesday 30th September 1-2pm, supporting Age Action Ireland. The webinar will feature talks on

- Healthy Lifestyle & older people
- Cancer Screening
- Acting early on signs of cancer
- Living well with and beyond cancer.

To book your place click on the webinar registration details below:

Aging Well: How to reduce your cancer risk webinar registration

Alcohol and Cancer Webinar

HSE Health and Wellbeing Alcohol Programme is hosting a Webinar 'Alcohol and Cancer – Reducing the Risk' supporting Mouth Cancer Awareness Day 2021. This webinar aims to promote awareness about how alcohol increases the risk of cancer, and how this risk can be reduced. There is a particular focus on mouth, head and neck cancers.

1 CPD credit has been approved by RCPI.

REGISTER HERE Alcohol and Cancer Webinar Registration

Cancer Risk Reduction Awareness Dates for you diary

- Mouth Cancer Awareness Day September 15th
- National Community Walking Day September 26th
- Positive Aging Week 27th September
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month October
- National Breastfeeding Week HSE 4th October
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month November
- EU Action on Alcohol Week 16th November

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.

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