

Irish Cancer Prevention Network



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scaghástála
National Screening Service

Newsletter October 2022

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 individual'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 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: National Survey on Cancer Awareness and Attitudes

The HSE National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) published the first National Survey on Cancer Awareness and Attitudes on September 6th 2022.

The research survey was conducted amongst a nationally representative sample of 2,874 adults aged 18 and over living in Ireland.

The survey showed that the majority of adults in Ireland are aware that tobacco smoking and unprotected sun exposure can cause cancer. However, there are lower levels of awareness of the cancer risk associated with alcohol consumption, dietary factors, physical activity, body weight, breastfeeding, infection (e.g. HPV, hepatitis) and medication (e.g. HRT and the contraceptive pill).

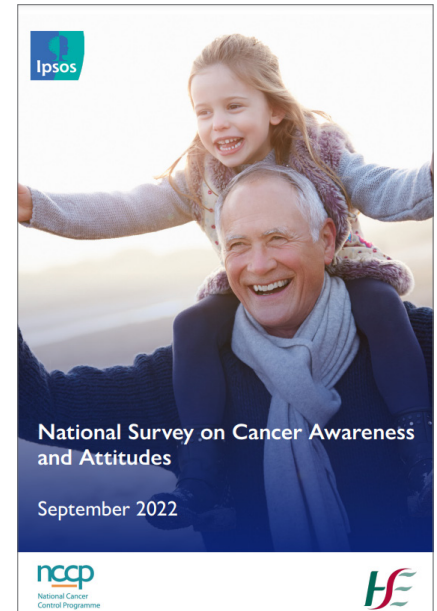
The survey showed that many adults in Ireland can't name common signs and symptoms of cancer without prompting. For example, less than 1 in 6 people (17%) named 'a persistent cough for more than 3 weeks' and less than 1 in 3 people (30%) named 'a change in your bowel habit' as potential signs of cancer. The most commonly recognised sign was 'unexplained lump or bump' - three quarters (74%) of people named this as a possible sign of cancer without being prompted. Awareness of cancer symptoms is lower among men, older people (age 65+) and people with lower levels of education.

Improving knowledge of cancer signs and symptoms is important because people who can recognise signs/symptoms, and who seek early medical intervention, are generally more likely to have less advanced disease and better prospects for treatment (National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026).

The findings of the survey can inform development of effective cancer prevention and early diagnosis initiatives and provide baseline information against which to measure the impact of these initiatives.

Download the report by [clicking here](#).

Watch webinar presentation on the report [clicking here](#).



National trends for cancers with population-based screening

In September the National Cancer Registry Ireland (NCRI) published its report – [Breast, cervical and colorectal cancer 1994-2019: National trends for cancers with population-based screening programmes in Ireland](#).

It details for the first time the positive impact of BowelScreen, BreastCheck and CervicalCheck on cancer detection in Ireland. There has been a noticeable increase in earlier diagnosis and a demonstrable reduction in mortality rates.

Key findings include:

- Cancers detected via screening were, on average, found at a much earlier stage in the screening age group than in the non-screening group
- Decreases in mortality rate for the three cancers were more substantial in the age-groups eligible for screening
- Survival is now higher and has improved more markedly in the screening age groups for all three cancers
- Population cancer screening in Ireland is effective.

Cancer Prevention Initiatives

Marie Keating Foundation Schools' Cancer Awareness Programme

The Marie Keating Foundation runs a Schools' Cancer Awareness Programme which is delivered every year by the Foundation's registered nurses to up to 5,000 students at junior cycle and senior cycle at approx. 100 secondary schools throughout the country. Originally developed together with the Department of Education as part of the Social Personal Health Education Programme, the modular, evidence-based programme educates students on healthy lifestyle choices, how to spot cancer early and how to reduce their risk of cancer in an engaging and interactive setting.

The programme is delivered free of charge to schools and interested parties can book a workshop [here](#).

Get SunSmart! Children's Art Competition

The HSE's NCCP in collaboration with Healthy Ireland ran a 'Get SunSmart Children's Art Competition' which ran from mid-May through to the end of June 2022. All primary school children were invited to be creative and learn how to enjoy the sun safely by entering into the competition. Depending on their age category children either coloured-in a SunSmart image or drew an image showing how to be 'SunSmart!' We were blown away by the talent and creativity of the entries we received for our first ever Get SunSmart art competition and had over 500 entrants into the competition. A video was shared across the social media channels to showcase the talent of the overall winners and runners-up in each category. You can watch the video back by [clicking here](#).

Have Your Say: Consultation Workshop on New Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026

The draft 'National Cancer Control Programme and Healthy Ireland Skin Cancer Prevention Plan Action Areas 2023-2026' is now ready for consultation. A consultation workshop, hosted by NCCP, will take place online via Zoom on: 20th October 2022 from 11.00 am – 2.00 pm. The views and opinions collected will be considered and will be used to inform the final draft of the new Skin Cancer Prevention Plan. The action areas in the new Plan will build on the work already delivered through implementation of the [Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022](#) and includes a focus on targeting high risk groups:

- Children
- Adolescents and young adults
- Outdoor workers
- Sports and outdoor leisure participants and spectators
- Sunbed users

You can register for the consultation by [clicking here](#).

SunSmart video series: re-imagining traditional health promotion campaigns

Dr Emma Porter, Dermatology Registrar at University Hospital Limerick (UHL), was awarded the poster Clinical Research Prize at the 10th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Irish Melanoma Forum in May 2022. The poster presented preliminary findings from a collaborative research initiative which examined the impact of a visual sun protection campaign on attitudes and behaviours of healthcare workers.

In 2021, the Irish Skin Foundation, Ms Evelyn Power, Clinical Nurse Specialist in skin cancer and Dr Sinead Field, Consultant Dermatologist, UHL, in association with the NCCP, and University of Limerick Hospital Group (ULHG) [launched a series of five video animations](#), to encourage people to build SunSmart behaviours into their everyday routine, especially from April – September when the intensity of sunburn producing ultraviolet radiation is greatest. The videos played on visual display units throughout ULHG hospitals and hospital social media channels throughout the summer, as part of a research initiative to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach in raising awareness of sun protective behaviours amongst staff. [More information](#).

Reducing Cancer Risk: E-learning Programme

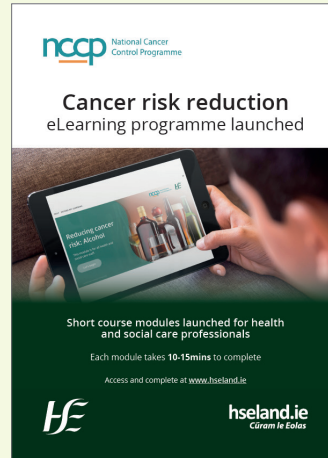
The HSE National Cancer Control Programme is developing a free e-learning programme on 'Reducing Cancer Risk' for health and social care professionals.

The programme consists of 11 short course modules on modifiable cancer risk reduction factors. Each module takes 10-15mins to complete and covers:

- How the modifiable risk factor affects cancer risk
- What cancers the risk factor can cause
- Cancer risk reduction advice
- Signposts to supports and further trusted sources of information.

Three modules are currently available on [HSELand](#): tobacco, alcohol and skin protection. In early 2023 all other modules will be published on [HSELand](#), including modules on body weight, eating for health, physical activity, radon, screening, HRT and breastfeeding, vaccines and workplace carcinogens.

Visit www.hseland.ie and search for 'Reducing Cancer Risk' to access the modules.



Irish Cancer Prevention Network: Reduce your cancer risk poster and booklet

You can now download the updated, Reduce your risk of cancer, poster and booklet, or order from www.healthpromotion.ie [Poster download](#) [Booklet download](#)

Resources on healthpromotion.ie

You can now order cancer risk reduction and symptom awareness resources from healthpromotion.ie. If you wish to order printed resources please visit www.healthpromotion.ie and choose 'cancer' on the drop-down menu.

Marie Keating Foundation Podcast Series

The Marie Keating Foundation 'Talks Cancer' Podcast Series, covering Melanoma and Skin Cancer; Lung Cancer; Prostate Cancer and Breast Cancer, is available [here](#).

Publications

Download the National Survey on Cancer Awareness and Attitudes report by [clicking here](#).

Cancer Risk Reduction Awareness Dates for your diary

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month 1st October – 31st October
- International Day Against Breast Cancer 19th October
- European Radon Day 7th November
- EU Action on Alcohol Week 16-20th November
- Cervical Cancer Elimination Day 17th November
- International Men's Health Day 19th November
- European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week 23-29th January 2023
- World Cancer Day 4th February 2023

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