

Reduce your Risk of Cancer



Eat a healthy diet • Be physically active • Be a healthy weight

Three positive steps to reduce your risk of cancer



01

DIET
Choose mostly plant foods,
limit red meat and avoid
processed meat



02

**PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**

Be physically active every
day in any way for 30
minutes or more

**Cancer
Prevention**

WEIGHT
Aim to be a healthy
weight throughout life



03

Source: World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF UK)

Three positive steps to reduce your risk of cancer

Eat a healthy diet

Be physically active

Be a healthy weight

You have the power to reduce your cancer risk by one-third by eating a healthy diet, being physically active and being a healthy weight.

This 3-step guide will help you achieve a healthier lifestyle that will not only reduce your risk of cancer, but leave you feeling great and with more energy.



eat a healthy diet

Step 1

The type of foods you eat can help you reduce your cancer risk. Your body needs nutrients from food to give you energy, keep you warm and protect you from disease. You can make food choices that give you a greater chance of avoiding cancer as well as meeting your body's needs.

The Food Pyramid tells you what makes up a healthy balanced diet. If you follow its guidelines you can increase your chance of staying healthy and reduces your cancer risk. Use it to plan your daily diet. See full size Food Pyramid overleaf.

Use the Food Pyramid to plan your healthy food choices every day and watch your portion size.





Cut down on foods high in calories, fat and sugar

This includes cakes, sweets and biscuits. Many foods from the top of the Food Pyramid are high in calories, fat and sugar and are low in nutrients. Cutting down on them can help you avoid becoming overweight or obese and reduce your cancer risk.



Cutting down on foods high in calories, fats and sugar reduces your risk of a number of cancers, such as bowel and breast cancer (in postmenopausal women)



Eat more fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses

Fruit & Vegetable

- Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day
- Use fresh, tinned (in natural juices or light syrup), frozen or dried fruit and vegetables
- Smoothies, vegetable soups, stews and casseroles can also help to boost your intake
- Remember fruit juices are high in sugar, so keep to one serving per day (150 ml)

By choosing a good selection of brightly coloured fruit and vegetables, like peppers, tomatoes and berries in season, you will get many of the important nutrients your body needs.



Wholegrains

Wholegrains help you to stay full for longer, keep a healthy weight and may reduce your risk of some cancers.

To increase your intake of wholegrains each day choose:

- brown bread instead of white
- porridge or wholegrain cereals for a healthy breakfast
- brown rice instead of white rice
- wholewheat pasta instead of ordinary pasta

Use the **Food Pyramid** to plan **your healthy food**

Understanding the Food Pyramid

Top Shelf foods are high in fat, sugar and salt, are not essential for health and taken in excess can be harmful.

Fats and oils are essential, but only in small amounts.

The foods and drinks on the bottom 4 shelves of the Food Pyramid are essential for good health.

A Guide to Measures

1 small glass = 100 ml

1 large glass = 200 ml

1 cup = 200 ml

A disposable cup is a good guide

1 teaspoon = 5g/ml

1 heaped teaspoon = 7g/ml

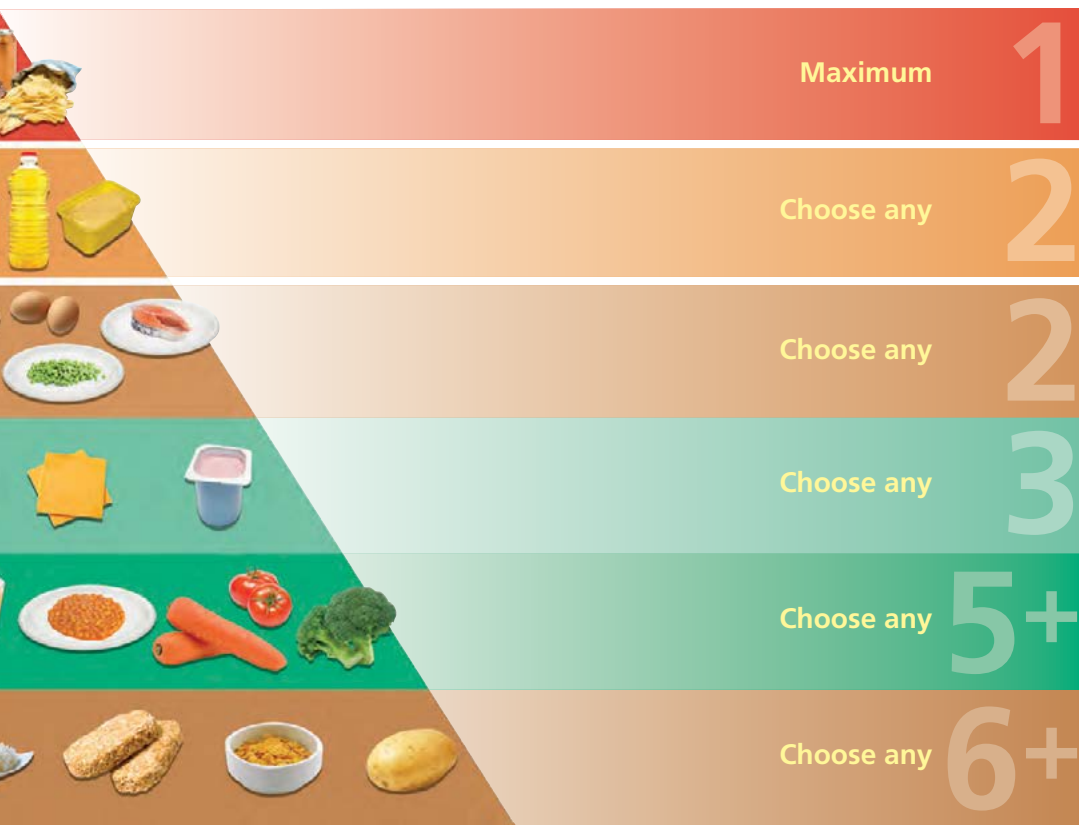
1 dessertspoon = 10g/ml



Drink water **regularly** – at least **8 cups** a day

Folic acid – an essential ingredient in making a baby. You can get folic acid from green leafy vegetables but if there is any possibility that you could become pregnant then you should be taking a folic acid tablet (400 micrograms per day).

choices every day and watch your portion size...



ay
id from
e pregnant

Source: Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health and Children

Pulses

Pulses, such as peas, beans and lentils, are good to include in your diet most days. They are high in fibre and protein and can help keep hunger pangs away.

- Tinned versions are convenient. Remember to drain away any liquid from the tin as it may be high in salt
- Add them to salads, casseroles or soups



Fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and pulses are generally low in calories and fat so they are a good food choice to help you watch your weight and reduce your cancer risk. They also contain:

- vitamins and minerals that help keep the body healthy and strengthen the immune system
- antioxidants that help protect cells in the body from damage that can lead to cancer
- fibre that is linked to a reduced cancer risk



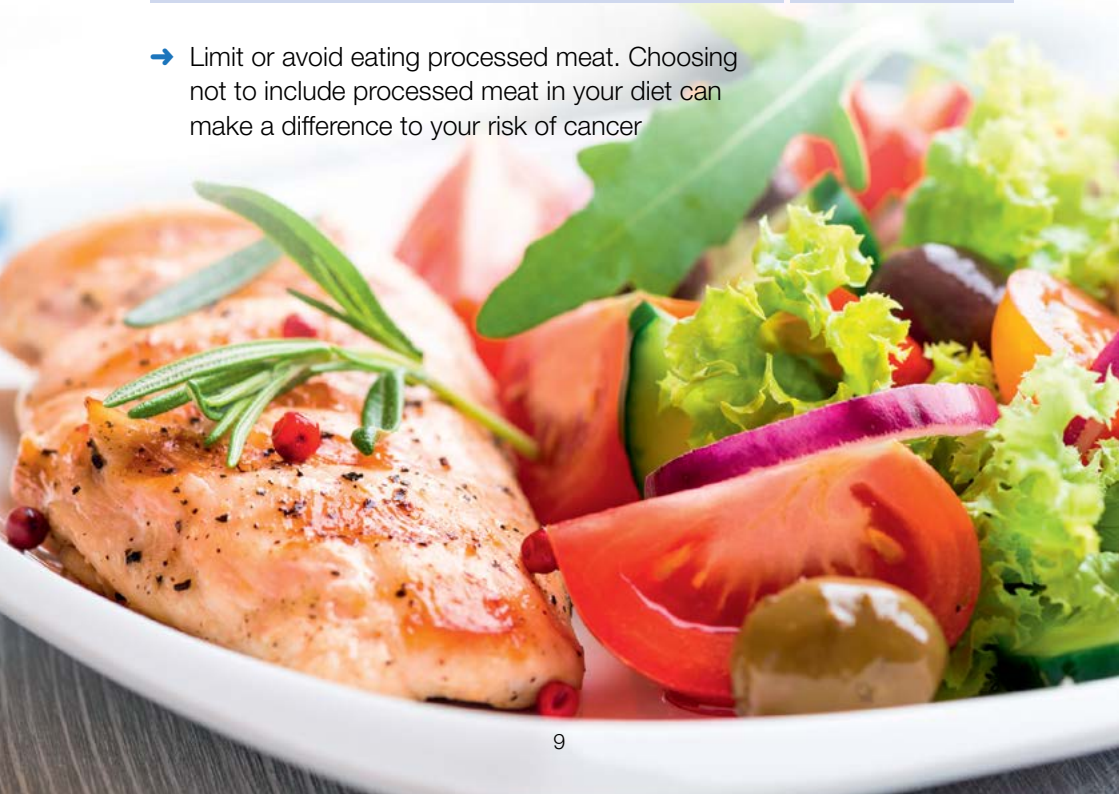
Limit your intake of red and processed meat

Meat is rich in valuable nutrients like protein and iron, but when taken in large amounts it can increase your risk of certain cancers. Therefore:

- Limit your intake to 500g or 18oz of cooked lean red meat per week (800g / 28oz of lean raw meat). This can be split into four or five portions over the week

RED MEAT	Cooked weight
Pork or lamb chop	75g
'Quarterpounder' beefburger	90g
Medium portion of roast beef, lamb or pork	90g
Medium steak	145g

- Limit or avoid eating processed meat. Choosing not to include processed meat in your diet can make a difference to your risk of cancer





What are processed meats?

Processed meats are meats that have been smoked, cured, salted or had chemical preservatives added. Sausages, hams, salami, pastrami, hot dogs and rashers are some examples.

You could try:

- Eggs (poached or scrambled) for breakfast
- Chicken or turkey (with the skin removed) or salmon for sandwiches or salads
- Spicy chicken instead of pepperoni on pizza
- Fresh/canned fish, chicken or other forms of poultry instead of red meat a couple of days a week
- A meat-free day



A diet high in red and processed meat is linked to bowel cancer. Stick to the recommended weekly amount to reduce your risk





Limit your intake of alcohol

Drinking alcohol increases your risk of cancer. To reduce the risk, avoid or limit your intake to:



MEN

**no more than two
standard
drinks per day**



WOMEN

**one standard drink
per day**



**A glass of stout / lager / cider (284ml)
A small glass of wine (100ml)**



Alcohol Units & calories in standard drinks

1/2 Pint of regular
beer, lager, cider
(284ml)
alc. 3.5 – 6.0% vol.
7.8 – 13.6g alcohol



**1
unit**

**68-286
calories**

Alcopop bottle
(275ml)
alc. 4.0 – 5.0% vol.
9.0 – 11.0g alcohol



**1
unit**

**220-244
calories**

Single measure of
spirits (35ml)
alc. 37.5 – 40.0% vol.
10.4 – 11.0g alcohol



**1
unit**

**72-78
calories**

Glass of red / white
wine (100ml)
alc. 9.5 – 14.5% vol.
7.5 – 11.6g alcohol



**1
unit**

**66-94
calories**



Cut down on salt

Salt is needed for human health, but Irish people take almost twice as much as they need. Many foods contain salt, such as breads and processed foods like meats, ready meals and pizzas, sauces, crackers, cakes, snack foods and cereals. Food does not have to taste salty to have high levels of salt in it.

To cut down your intake of salt:

- Use mainly fresh ingredients when cooking
- Choose foods low in salt – try spicy flavours instead
- Cut out salt when cooking and at the table
- Flavour foods with black pepper, herbs, lemon juice, garlic and spices



Salt and foods preserved with salt are most likely a cause of stomach cancer



Dietary supplements are not a replacement for a healthy balanced diet

Most people can get all the nutrients they need by following a healthy balanced diet using the Food Pyramid. The best source of nourishment is food and drink, not dietary supplements. There may be times during your life when your doctor or dietitian may advise you to take supplements for a period of time. Otherwise, there is no need.



Step 2

be physically active

Being physically active can reduce your risk of cancer and your risk of cancer recurrence. It also helps avoid weight gain, obesity, heart disease and diabetes, as well as making you feel better both physically and mentally.

How active do I need to be?

- Every little helps, but the more activity the better
- Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.
- Moderate physical activity is activity that makes you a little out of puff, but where you are able to talk comfortably.
- Try and progress the exercise you are doing gradually. You can do this by walking a little farther each week or gradually getting a little faster.

How to get started

- Check with your doctor if you have not been active for a while or have health problems
- Seek the advice of a Chartered Physiotherapist, as they specialise in exercise prescription, especially for people with health problems
- If you have not been active for a while, start slowly, with 10-15 minutes of activity three to four times a week, and gradually build up to 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Remember that two or three shorter sessions can be used to build up to your total time per day
- Choose an activity that you have liked in the past or have always wanted to start
- You don't have to be sporty to be physically active and it doesn't have to cost money. Walking, cycling, dancing, and doing vigorous housework or gardening all count
- You can also do some strengthening and flexibility work, like yoga or pilates, a couple of times a week

Use the **Physical Activity Pyramid** below to plan



Designed in partnership with the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists.

what activities you might build into your everyday life...

Cut down on:

Watching TV, being on a computer or playing computer games, taking lifts and escalators, sitting for more than 30 minutes at a time

2-3 times a week – Strength & Flexibility

Pilates, yoga, Tai Chi, lifting light weights (resistance training)

5-7 days a week – Aerobic exercise Accumulate a total of 30-60 minutes daily

Jog, cycle, brisk walk, swim, tennis, dance, hike, aerobics, aqua-aerobics

Every day- Be active!

Take stairs instead of lifts and escalators
Garden, mow the lawn, walk the dog, get up to change TV channels (instead of using the remote), walk to the shops



Step 3

be a healthy weight

Your risk of getting some cancers and other diseases increases if you are overweight or obese. Extra fat stored around your waist puts you at greater risk. There are two ways of finding out if you are a healthy weight:

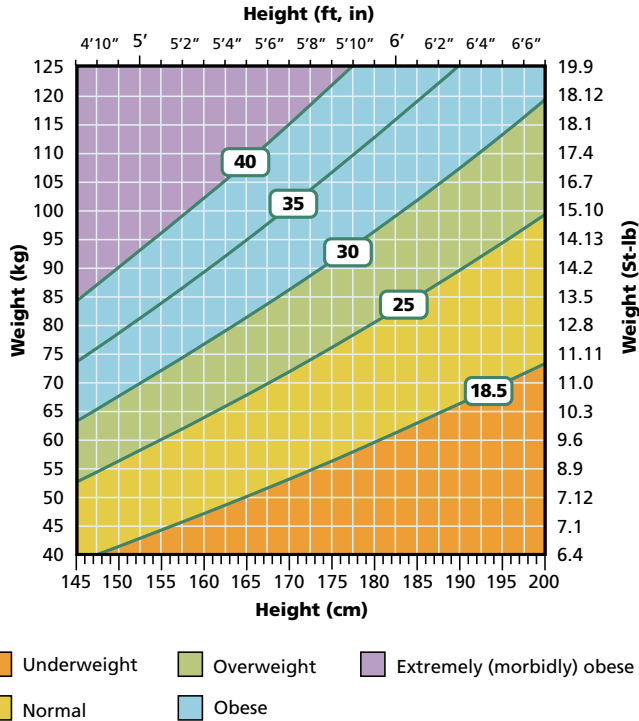
- Body mass index (BMI)
- Waistline measurement



The risk of cancer of the bowel, kidney, womb and breast (in postmenopausal women), oesophagus and pancreas are all strongly linked with being overweight or obese



Body mass index



Draw a line across from your weight, and up or down from your height. Where these two lines cross is your body mass index. To reduce your cancer risk aim to be at the lower end of the normal BMI range.



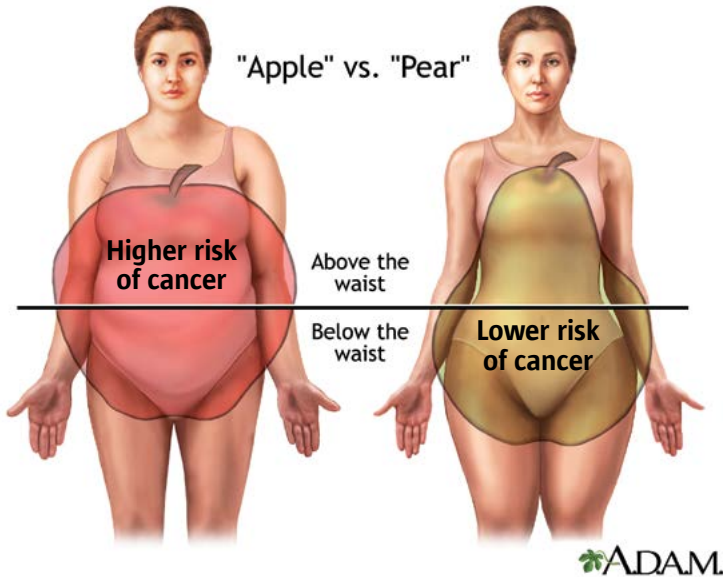
What does your BMI measurement mean?

- Less than 18.5** You are underweight, which can lead to some health problems
- 18.5-24.9** You are a healthy normal weight and at a lower risk of cancer
- 25-29.9** You are overweight, which increases your cancer risk
- Greater than 30** You are obese and your risk of cancer is even greater

If you are under or overweight, it is important to see your doctor. A medical check-up and advice on diet and lifestyle may be needed. Remember, BMI is not always an accurate measure if you are an athlete, pregnant or very short in height.



Waistline measurement



To measure your waistline:

- Place the tape measure around your waist at the narrowest point between the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hip bone
- At this point, measure around your waist. Make sure the tape measure is snug but not marking your skin
- Take the measurement at the end of your normal breath

You are at increased risk of cancer if:

- your waistline is greater than 94 cm or 37 inches for men
- and is greater than 81cm or 32 inches for women

If you are a healthy weight keep it that way:

- Be physically active
- Eat a healthy, varied diet as shown in the Food Pyramid
- Watch your portion size. See the Food Pyramid for guidelines
- Snack on fruit and vegetables if you are hungry
- Check food labels. Low fat foods that are high in sugar may not help you keep a healthy weight

other important information

Breastfeed your baby

Breastfeeding helps to protect mothers against breast cancer. It is the ideal way to provide babies with all the nutrients they need and help to reduce their risk of becoming overweight and obese at the same time. For this reason, it is best to breastfeed your baby for the first six months, if possible. After that, continue to breastfeed as you add other liquids and food to your baby's diet.

To find out more go to www.breastfeeding.ie

Advice for cancer survivors

Research has shown that eating a healthy diet, being physically active and being a healthy weight may help reduce your risk of cancer coming back. Follow our cancer prevention advice for diet, physical activity and weight. Make sure to check with your doctor first that the prevention advice is suitable for you.

Method of cooking

Some research says that how you cook your food may increase your cancer risk. Choose baking, boiling, steaming or stir frying as healthy cooking methods. This will also limit your intake of fat and reduce your risk of being overweight.



Did you know that about half of all cancers could be avoided?

What can you do to reduce your risk of cancer?

12

WAYS TO
REDUCE
YOUR
CANCER
RISK

BASED ON THE EUROPEAN
CODE AGAINST CANCER.

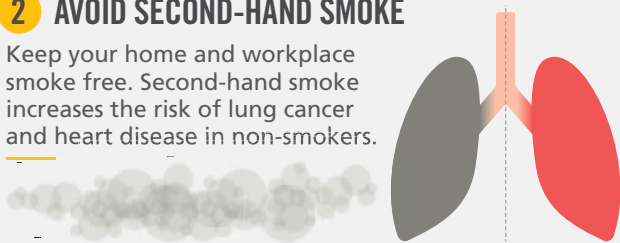
1 DO NOT SMOKE

One in three of all cancers is related to smoking. Cut out the cigarettes and cut your cancer risk.



2 AVOID SECOND-HAND SMOKE

Keep your home and workplace smoke free. Second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease in non-smokers.



3 BE A HEALTHY WEIGHT

As the amount of fat in the body increases, so does the chance of developing certain cancers. Take action to have a healthy body weight by being physically active and eating a healthy diet.



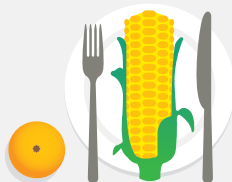
4 BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Limit the time you spend sitting and aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day.



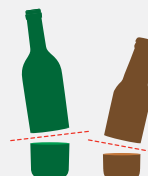
5 HAVE A HEALTHY DIET

Eat fruit, vegetables, whole grains and pulses. Limit foods high in sugar, salt and fat. Avoid processed meat and limit red meat.



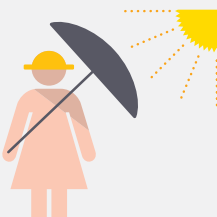
6 AVOID ALCOHOL

Drinking alcohol can cause at least seven types of cancer. Cutting back - or even better - avoiding alcohol altogether will reduce your risk.



7 AVOID TOO MUCH SUN

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with over 10,000 new cases diagnosed in 2011. Be SunSmart: protect your skin when outdoors (sunscreen is not enough) and avoid sunbeds.



8 POLLUTANTS

Protect yourself in your workplace and follow health and safety instructions.



9 RADIATION

Find out if you are exposed to radiation from naturally high radon levels in your home. Find out more information on radon levels from the Environmental Protection Agency. www.epa.ie



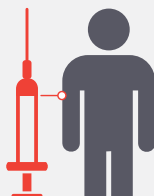
10 ADVICE FOR WOMEN

Breastfeeding is proven to reduce the risk of cancer. HRT is a hormonal drug for menopausal symptoms which increase risk of certain cancers. Limit HRT.



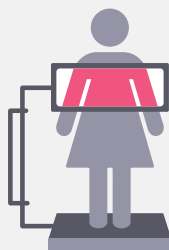
11 GET VACCINATIONS

Some cancers are spread by viruses and bacteria. Ensure your children take part in vaccination programmes for Hepatitis B (for newborns) and Human papillomavirus (HPV) (for girls over 12 years).



12 GET SCREENED FOR CANCER

Screening is checking for cancer or conditions that may lead to cancer in people that may have no symptoms. Take part in organised cancer screening programmes for bowel cancer (men and women, breast cancer (women) and cervical cancer (women). www.cancerscreening.ie



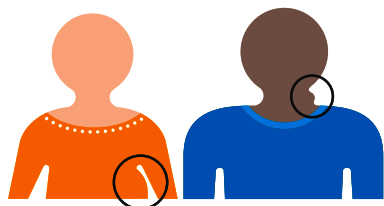
Find out more about the **European Code Against Cancer** and ways to reduce your cancer risk on www.cancer.ie/europeancode or call: 1800 200 700

Cancer specialists and scientists from across Europe compiled the code based on the latest scientific evidence on cancer prevention. This code was developed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and the European Commission 2014.

spot cancer early

The three main changes to look for are:

1. Unexplained changes

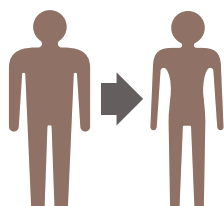


A lump or swelling

Make sure to check your whole body, not just your testicles or breasts.

Bleeding that is not normal for you

Coughing up blood or noticing it in your urine or bowel motion is not normal. Neither is bleeding from your vagina between periods, after sex or after the menopause.

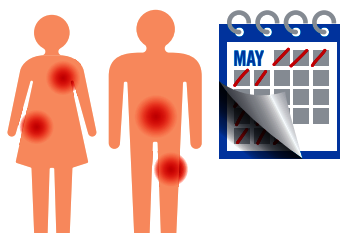


Weight loss

It is normal to see small weight changes over time. But a big weight loss, not related to dieting, may be a sign of something more serious.

Pain that does not go away

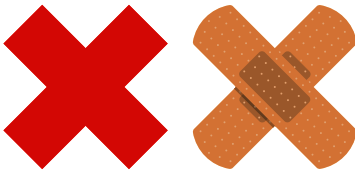
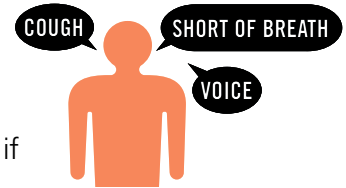
If you feel pain for more than four weeks that you cannot explain, talk to your doctor about it.



2. Persistent changes

A cough, changes in your voice or feeling short of breath

Speak to your doctor if you have any of these problems for more than three weeks, especially if you are a smoker or ex-smoker.

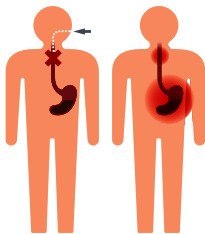
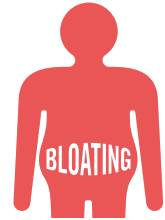


A sore that does not heal

If a spot, wart or sore does not heal in a few weeks, get it checked by your doctor, even if it is painless.

Bloating

If bloating does not go away within a few weeks talk to your doctor about it.

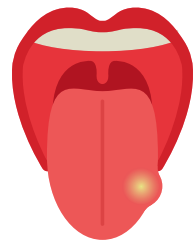


Difficulty swallowing, indigestion or heartburn

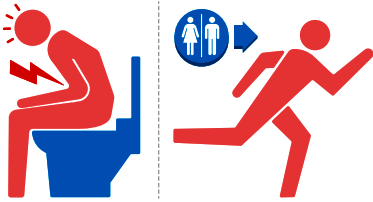
It is not normal to have indigestion or heartburn that happens a lot or is very painful. Difficulty swallowing is not normal either. Get it checked by your doctor.

Mouth or tongue ulcer

Having a mouth or tongue ulcer for three weeks or more is not normal and needs to be checked by your doctor or dentist.



3. Unusual changes

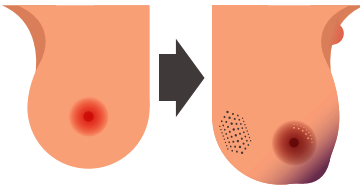
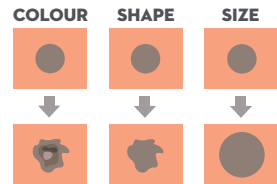


A change in your bowel or bladder habits

If you have constipation, diarrhoea or problems passing urine for more than a few weeks, talk to your doctor.

A new mole or change to an existing mole

Start checking your skin today and talk to your doctor if you notice any skin changes, especially a new mole or any change to an existing mole.



Any change in your breast

Get into the habit of looking at and feeling your breasts for changes in the shape, size, nipples and skin. Also watch for pain in one breast.

These changes are important ones to look out for and act on. But do tell your doctor if you notice any other **unusual change in how your body looks, feels and works.**

useful contacts


To find out more about any of the information in this booklet or about cancer in general:

- Visit us at **www.cancer.ie**
- Call our **Cancer Nurseline** on Freephone 1800 200 700, and speak to one of our cancer nurses for confidential advice, support and information. The Cancer Nurseline is open Monday to Thursday 9am - 6pm and Friday 9am - 5pm. You can also email us on **cancernurseline@irishcancer.ie**; or visit our Online Community at **www.cancer.ie**

To speak with a cancer nurse in person visit one of our **Daffodil Centres**:

- Our **Daffodil Centres** are located in thirteen hospitals nationwide. The centres are staffed by cancer nurses and trained volunteers who provide confidential advice, support and information to anyone concerned about or affected by cancer.

To keep in touch with the Society's activities, including cancer prevention campaigns and messages:

Like us on :

www.facebook.com/IrishCancerSociety

Follow us on :

<https://twitter.com/IrishCancerSoc>



National Cancer Helpline:
Freefone 1800 200 700

www.cancer.ie

© Irish Cancer Society, 2014

NEXT REVISION: 2017



**We won't give up
until cancer does**

