

# Lifestyle choices that can decrease cancer risk

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According to the World Health Organization, cancer is the second-leading cause of death across the globe. Responsible for nearly nine million deaths in 2015, cancer is a formidable foe but one that can be defeated. For example, the SEER Cancer Statistics Review released in spring of 2018 indicated that cancer death rates among women decreased by 1.4 percent between 2006 and 2015. Even more encouraging is the decline

in breast cancer death rates, which the American Cancer Society says decreased by 39 percent between 1989 and 2015.

Various factors have contributed to the decline in cancer death rates. While advancements in treatment protocols and education programs that have emphasized the importance of cancer screenings have had profound impacts, individuals avoiding unhealthy lifestyle choices also has made a difference in reversing cancer death rates. Research into cancer prevention is ongoing, but the following are some healthy lifestyle choices that may help people reduce their cancer risk.

- Avoid tobacco. The U.S. Department



## Office in Brownwood



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Hendrick Medican Center is pleased to announce that Chris McClish, M.D., has office hours the first and third Tuesdays of each month in Brownwood. Dr. McClish is an interventional cardiologist at Cardiology Consultants in Abilene. He earned his medical degree at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and completed his residency, internship and cardiology fellowship at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. He also completed a Fellowship in Interventional Cardiology at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Dr. McClish is board certified in Cardiovascular Disease and Interventional Cardiology.

**Now seeing patients in Brownwood the first and third Tuesdays of each month.**



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of Health and Human Services reports that cigarette smoking kills almost half a million people in America alone each year. Nearly 10 percent of those deaths occur due to exposure to secondhand smoke. Lung cancer is not the only type of cancer that smoking has been linked to, as the Mayo Clinic notes smoking also has been connected to cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, pancreas, bladder, cervix, and kidney. By avoiding or quitting tobacco, men and women can reduce their own cancer risk and reduce the likelihood that their nonsmoking loved ones will develop cancer related to secondhand smoke.

- Eat right. The WHO notes that many countries have implemented programs encouraging the consumption of five or more portions of fruits and vegetables per day. Those programs are a result of studies showing the potential relationship between a healthy diet and a reduced risk of cancer. For example, the National Cancer Institute says studies conducted on animals have shown that antioxidants, which can be found in various fruits and vegetables, can prevent the type of cell damage associated with the development of cancer.

- Protect skin from the sun. In 2018, the American Cancer Society notes that more people are diagnosed with skin

cancer in the United States each year than all other cancers combined. While overexposure to the sun is not the only way a person can develop skin cancer, protecting skin from the sun is a great way for people to significantly reduce their risk for the disease. The Mayo Clinic recommends people avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest. People also should apply and reapply generous amounts of sunscreen when spending time outdoors.

- Speak with a physician about immunizations. The Mayo Clinic notes that protecting oneself against certain viral infections also may help men and women reduce their cancer risk. For example, hepatitis B has been linked to liver cancer. Certain people, including those who are sexually active but not monogamous, intravenous drug users and health care or public safety workers who may be exposed to infected blood or body fluids, are at greater risk of hepatitis B than others, and such people should speak with their physicians about being vaccinated.

Cancer can affect both healthy and unhealthy people. But certain cancer prevention strategies may help men and women lower their cancer risk.