

# Cancer Prevention Begins Early

Starting healthy habits now can help your child lower their risk of cancer in adulthood. Here are five steps for making healthy choices part of your family's life:



## 1. Eat a healthy diet

A healthy diet plays a key role in preventing cancer. Healthy eating habits can help reduce the risk of obesity and may reduce the risk of some types of cancers in adulthood.

**Give it a try:** Eat more plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans. Try to eat less red meat and salt in your diet. And try to avoid processed meat, high-calorie foods, sugary drinks, and preservatives.



## 2. Use sunscreen and practice sun safety

Protecting your skin from the sun is the best way to prevent skin cancer. Did you know that most skin cancers are a result of ultraviolet or UV rays? These rays can come from sunlight, as well as indoor tanning equipment. Use a combination of sunscreen, a hat and sun-safe clothing to protect yourself.

**Give it a try:** Choose a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Put it on 30 minutes before you go outside, on sunny and cloudy days. Then, re-apply it every 2 hours. Try to stay in the shade and limit your time in the sun in the middle of the day. Wear a hat, sunglasses and clothing that covers your arms and legs.



### 3. Get vaccinated against HPV

HPV is a very common virus that can cause six types of cancer in adulthood. On-time HPV vaccination can prevent more than 90% of cancers caused by HPV and is most effective when given by the 13th birthday.

**Keep in mind:** It is recommended that boys and girls get two doses of the HPV vaccination between the ages of 9 and 12. The immune response is best at these ages. Learn more at [stjude.org/HPV](https://stjude.org/HPV).



### 4. Be active

Physical activity or exercise is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle and healthy weight. Getting active can boost your overall health and reduce your risk for certain cancers.

**Give it a try:** Aim to engage in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Take trips to the playground, go for walks in your neighborhood or play a sport.



### 5. Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke

One of the most straightforward ways to avoid cancer is by avoiding tobacco products. Don't smoke. Don't vape. Don't use smokeless tobacco. These products harbor chemicals that can contribute to cancer and other severe health risks.

**Keep in mind:** The best way to prevent your child from smoking is to talk with your children about the dangers of tobacco use.

Find more tips for healthy living at [together.stjude.org](https://together.stjude.org).

*This information is general education and does not replace medical advice. Medical information changes quickly based on scientific developments. We may update our content periodically. Call your physician or care team for medical advice.*

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