



PREVENTION IN ACTION:

The Cancer Awareness to Action Pipeline

Cancer used to be mostly about knowing your family history and getting screened. Those things still matter, but now we know that what you do every day plays a big role too. Moving your body, eating whole foods, getting enough sleep, limiting alcohol, quitting tobacco use, and managing stress all help protect your cells and keep your immune system strong.

Rest assured; you do not have to change everything all at once. Even one small upgrade this week can make a compound difference over time.

Everyday Behaviors That Lower Cancer Risk

Here are the habits that research shows can help reduce cancer risk:

MOVE MORE, SIT LESS

You do not need a gym membership to get enough exercise each day. A 20-minute walk during lunch, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or doing a few stretches in the morning all count. Regular movement helps control weight, balance hormones, and supports your immune system.

EAT MORE PLANTS

Vegetables, fruits, beans, and whole grains are rich in fiber and nutrients that help protect cells. Going on a strict diet

isn't necessary. Just add one extra serving of veggies to lunch or swap white rice for brown rice.

LIMIT ALCOHOL

Alcohol is linked to several types of cancer. If you drink, keeping it to one drink or less per day for women, and two or less for men, can help lower risk. Some people choose not to drink at all.

GET QUALITY SLEEP

Sleep is when your body repairs itself. Aim for seven to nine hours nightly. Keep your bedroom cool and dark, limit screen time before bed, and try to go to sleep around the same time each night.

QUIT TOBACCO

Smoking and vaping increase cancer risk. If you use tobacco, quitting is the single best thing you can do for your

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We've highlighted some resources you may want to look into further. Simply click or tap the icon or its hyperlink to access these select materials!

KNOW YOUR RISK



Biological cancer risks such as age, gender and family history are important and play a critical role in cancer prevention.

Talk to your doctor about:

- ▶ Your family history of cancer
- ▶ Whether you need genetic testing
- ▶ Which cancer screenings you should get and when
- ▶ Lifestyle changes that can lower your risk

If cost is a concern, many preventive screenings are covered at no cost through your BCBSIL benefits. Partner with your Primary Care Physician (PCP) to determine what screenings are covered and right fit for you. If you do not have a PCP, you may call the Health Advocate number on the back of your BCBSIL member ID card or log on to Blue Access for MembersSM (BAMSM) [bcbsil.com](https://www.bcbsil.com) and use Find Care. This fast, easy-to-use tool improves members' experience when searching for in-network health care providers.

 **CLICK OR TAP!**

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health. Your BCBSIL benefits include resources to help you quit.

How Stress Affects Cancer Risk

Chronic stress does not directly cause cancer, but it can weaken your immune system and wreak havoc on hormone levels. When your body stays in stress mode for too long, it has a harder time fighting cellular damage.

Stress also influences decisions. When you are overwhelmed, it can be harder to sleep well, eat healthily, or move your body. Managing stress means not only feeling calmer but also giving your body the best chance to stay healthy.

Simple Ways to Manage Stress

Meditation apps and yoga classes aren't the only tools you can use to manage stress. These simple habits can help you feel more balanced:

TAKE FIVE SLOW BREATHS

When you feel tension building, pause and take five slow, deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose for four counts, hold for four, and breathe out through your mouth for four. This sends a signal to the central nervous system that you are safe, which calms the body and quiets noisy thoughts.

STEP OUTSIDE

Even five minutes in fresh air can reset your mood. Walk around the block, sit on a bench, or just stand in the sun for a moment.

WRITE IT DOWN

Dedicate at least two minutes to writing everything that's weighing on your heart and mind. Do not think about grammar, spelling or neatness.

Writing problems down is a singular first step toward calming the mind, reducing stress and increasing clarity for potential solutions.

MOVE YOUR BODY

A short walk, stretching, or dancing to one song can release tension and boost your mood. If you are starting to feel stressed, this is one of the best things you can do for your mental health.

CONNECT WITH SOMEONE

Text a friend, call a family member, or chat with a coworker. Human connection helps lower stress.



Tools That Help Track Health

Wearable devices like fitness trackers and smartwatches are more affordable than ever. Many can track your steps, heart rate, sleep, and activity levels. Some apps can remind you to move, drink water, or take a break.

You do not need the fanciest device on the market. A basic tracker or even a free app on your phone can help you see patterns and stay motivated. The goal is awareness, not perfection.

Your [BCBSIL Blue Access for Members \(BAM\) portal](#) also offers digital tools and health trackers that can help you set goals and monitor progress.

Benefit Resources

Your BCBSIL benefits include resources to support cancer prevention. Visit the [BCBSIL Connect Community hub](#) page to explore wellness programs, preventive care tools, and health coaching. You can also log into your BAM portal to access digital health trackers and personalized wellness resources.

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AI PROMPTS FOR PERSONALIZED PREVENTION PLANNING

AI tools can help you build a prevention plan that fits your life.

Try these prompts:

- ▶ "Provide a list of questions I can ask my primary care provider about cancer prevention."
- ▶ "Create a 7-day plan to help me move more during my workday without going to a gym."
- ▶ "Give me five simple stress-relief habits I can do in under 5 minutes."
- ▶ "Build a weekly routine that includes movement, better sleep, and stress management for someone with a busy schedule."
- ▶ "What are three realistic ways I can cut back on alcohol without feeling like I'm missing out?"

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Realistic Movement and Lifestyle Swaps

Better health is within your reach. These are some accessible changes you can try this week and beyond.

INSTEAD OF:	TRY:
Sitting during your lunch break	A 10-minute walk around the building or parking lot
Driving to close errands	Walking or biking when possible
Scrolling before bed	Reading for 10 minutes or listening to calming music
Drinking soda all day	Water with lemon or unsweetened iced tea
Skipping breakfast	A quick bowl of oatmeal with fruit or a hard-boiled egg
Eating lunch at your desk	Eating in the break room or outside to give your mind a rest and to interact with others



SOURCES: [American Cancer Society](#), [National Cancer Institute](#), [Haykin and Rolls](#), [Martino et al](#)

Share this issue with others to help them get a jump on better health!