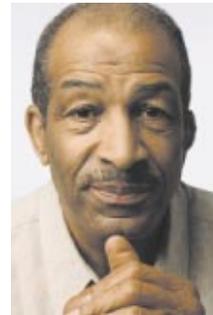


What Every African-American Man Should Know About Cancer



*Michigan Department
of Community Health*



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African-American men often don't like to talk about their health problems. They may not see a doctor until serious problems have developed. This makes prevention of illness and treatment difficult.

Understanding more about your body and how it works can help you develop a healthy lifestyle. This can prevent illness or disease. The major risky health behaviors are smoking, alcohol and substance abuse, lack of exercise, poor diet, unsafe sex and not wearing seatbelts in cars. These are things that can lead to illness, disability, and death.

Despite some encouraging progress, black men still have the highest cancer rate in the nation. Cancer is the second leading cause of death for black men. The three major cancers affecting black men and some of their symptoms are:

1. Lung cancer – the leading cancer killer of black men. Symptoms are chronic cough, coughing up blood, chest pain, and getting pneumonia again and again.
2. Prostate cancer – the most commonly diagnosed cancer for black men. Men with a family history of prostate cancer are at highest risk for the disease. Symptoms are weak urine flow; stop-and-go urine flow; frequent need to urinate, especially at night; pain or burning feeling when urinating.

3. Colon-rectal cancer – the third most common cause of cancer for black men over 65. Symptoms are bleeding from the rectum, blood in stool, and change in bowel habits.

If you have any of the symptoms described in the list of cancers, see your doctor or other health care provider immediately.

Risk Factors:

Factors that can be changed: About 78 percent of lung cancer deaths and 30 percent of all cancer deaths are linked to smoking cigarettes and cigars. A high fat diet, little or no exercise, and lack of regular medical check-ups also contribute to higher cancer rates for black men. Factors that can't be changed are a family history of cancer, age, and race.

You Can Make the Difference:

Staying informed about your health and avoiding risky health behaviors are vital in fighting the health problems black men face today. Develop a plan that works best for you.

