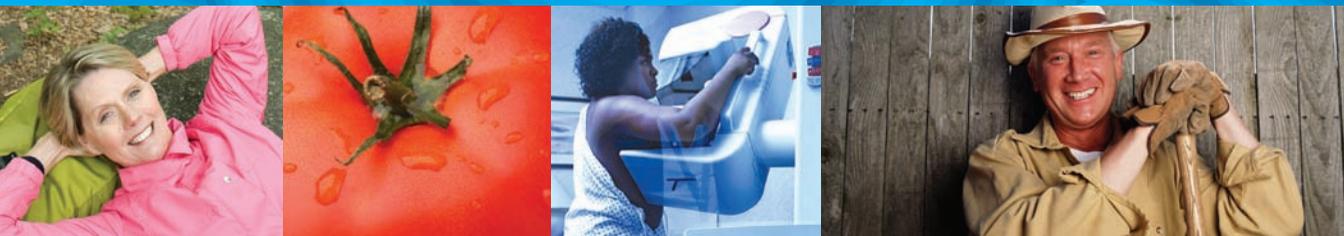




# CANCER SURVIVORS' 8IGHT WAYS

to stay healthy after cancer



**CANCER'S HARD.** No two ways about it. Diagnosis and treatment can be frightening and draining, and even after you've made it past those hurdles, you have to learn how to make your way through life as a cancer survivor. With modern medicine, though, millions of survivors are not only living longer but they're also learning to live better. And one of the best paths to doing that is to take steps to take control of your health. These 8 "ways" can be your guide that helps lay the foundation for the many health-filled years that most survivors enjoy.

It's almost never too early to start. Whether you've just been diagnosed, are going through treatment, or are post-treatment, these eight behaviors can help boost your health. Your doctor can help guide you, but the only limitation, really, is when you want to start. Begin with one or two; once you've got those down, move on to the others.

### 1. DON'T SMOKE

You've heard it before, of course. But, if you smoke, the single best thing you can do as a survivor is stop. It'll lower your risk of developing a second cancer as well as heart disease and stroke. Yes, it's hard. But, it's far from impossible.

#### TIPS

- Keep trying! It often takes 6 or 7 tries before you quit for good.
- Talk to a health care provider for help, it can double your chances of success.
- Call 1-800-QUITNOW or visit [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov) for extra help.
- Join a quit-smoking program. Your workplace or health plan may offer one.

### 2. AVOID SECONDHAND SMOKE

If you don't smoke, and even if you do – stay away from secondhand smoke. It's not as bad as smoking yourself, but spending time in smoky places can further raise the risk of cancer as well as heart disease.

#### TIPS

- Avoid smoky bars and restaurants.
- Try to work in a non-smoking workplace.
- Make your house "non-smoking" and don't give in, not to spouses, kids, or friends.

### 3. EXERCISE REGULARLY

It's tough for a lot of people to fit exercise in to their schedules. For survivors whose regular routines have been so interrupted and who may have just gone through treatment, it can be even tougher. But, the benefits of regular activity make it well worth the effort to fit it in, even for those in the middle of treatment.

It not only boosts health but also improves mood and helps counter cancer-related fatigue. Regular exercise may lower the risk of recurrence and help cut the risk of other chronic diseases.

Try to get at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity (like brisk walking) every day. More is even better.

#### TIPS

- Choose activities you enjoy. Many things count as exercise, like walking, gardening, and dancing.
- Make exercise a habit by setting aside the same time for it each day--try going to the gym each day at lunchtime or taking a walk regularly after dinner.
- Stay motivated by exercising with someone.

### 4. AVOID WEIGHT GAIN

With the stress, treatment side effects, and changes to life's routine that a cancer diagnosis can bring, it can be hard for survivors to keep weight in check. Still, it's an important goal that all survivors should shoot for. Next to not smoking, it's the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and quality of life.

#### TIPS

- Limit time in front of the TV and computer.
- Integrate physical activity and movement into your life.
- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Choose smaller portions, and eat more slowly.

### 5. EAT A HEALTHY DIET

As a survivor it can be tough to know how you should eat. Books and articles and websites spout "wonder" diets, but the reality is that healthy eating is the same for cancer survivors as it is for everyone else. A healthy diet can help keep weight in check, give your body the nutrients it needs, and the energy you need to make it through a busy day.

You should focus on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and keep red meat to a minimum. It's also important to cut back on bad fats (saturated and trans fat), and choose healthy fats (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) more often.

# 8IGHT

## healthy behaviors for cancer survivors

Taking a multivitamin with folate everyday is a great nutrition insurance policy.

#### TIPS

- Make fruits and vegetables a part of every meal. Put fruit on your cereal. Eat vegetables as a snack.
- Choose chicken, fish, or beans, instead of red meat.
- Choose whole-grain cereal, brown rice, and whole-wheat bread over their more refined counterparts.
- Choose dishes made with olive or canola oil, which are high in healthy fats.
- Cut back on fast food and store-bought snacks (like cookies), which are high in bad fats.
- Buy a 100% RDA multivitamin that contains folate.

### 6. DRINK ALCOHOL IN MODERATION, IF AT ALL

Alcohol can be a complicated issue, especially for survivors. Moderate consumption can be heart healthy – a big benefit – but at the same time increase the risk of a later cancer. On top of this, alcohol can become for some an unhealthy way to deal with the physical and emotional stress of dealing with cancer.

If you don't drink, don't feel the need to start. If you do, keep it to moderate levels (1 drink/day for women; 1 – 2 drinks/day for men). Those who drink more should cut back.

#### TIPS

- Choose non-alcoholic beverages at meals and parties.
- Avoid occasions centered around alcohol.
- Talk to a health care professional if you feel you have a problem with alcohol.

### 7. STAY CONNECTED WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND OTHER SURVIVORS

There is real power in staying connected with friends, family, and other cancer survivors. Keeping up and building on a social network can significantly improve quality of life, and possibly even prognosis, in cancer survivors. Even in those with great support from family and friends, cancer can seem isolating, so it can take some effort to keep up these relationships.

#### TIPS

- Schedule a time each week to get together with friends or family.
- Use technology to your advantage. Email and video phone services (like Skype or Face Time) are great ways to keep in touch with people.
- Frequent in-person or online survivors' support groups, which can be a great place to share feelings and concerns with those who've been through similar things. The Internet and phone can be powerful support tools, particularly for those who live in more rural areas or who have been diagnosed with rare cancers.

### 8. GET SCREENING TESTS AND GO TO YOUR REGULAR CHECK-UPS

As a survivor, there's nothing more important than going to your regular post-treatment check-ups. They're not only key to your health as a survivor but also great places to share any concerns or questions with your provider.

In addition to any follow up tests specific to your cancer, it's also important to keep getting recommended screening tests for other cancers and for heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis risk factors.

**Talk to your doctor about tests that screen for:**

- Breast cancer
- Colon cancer
- Cervical cancer
- High blood sugar
- High blood pressure
- Unhealthy blood cholesterol
- Osteoporosis

## Cancer News in Context

*Making sense of the headlines*

[www.cancernewsincontext.org](http://www.cancernewsincontext.org)



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