

# Cancer and cancer screening

**The Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recommends individuals get screened for colorectal, breast, and cervical cancer.**

Read below to learn more.

## Colorectal cancer

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the United States but can be prevented or detected early through screening.

### Know the signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer:

- Bleeding from the rectum
- Blood in the stool
- Change in bowel habits
- Change in stool shape
- Stomach cramping and pain
- Poor appetite
- Unexplained weight loss
- Feeling the need to have a bowel movement with no relief after having one

### Who should be screened?

According to the American Cancer Society, it is recommended people between the age 45 and 75 get screened for colorectal cancer. Individuals who have a personal history, family history, or other risk factors for colorectal cancer may need to start screening earlier. These individuals should talk to their doctor about early screening or contact the resources included below if they don't have a regular doctor.

### How to get screened

There are two main methods to screen for colorectal cancer:

- Stool-based tests look for signs of cancer in an individual's stool sample. Screening may need to be done every 1–3 years based on the type of test.
- Visual exams, such as a colonoscopy or CT colonography, look at the colon and rectum through a camera or image. This screening method only needs to be performed every 5–10 years based on the type of exam.

### Steps to reduce your cancer risk

- Get screened regularly for colorectal cancer
- Reach or maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Avoid or reduce processed food and red meats.
- Avoid or limit alcohol consumption
- Avoid tobacco. If you smoke, quit.



## Breast cancer

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women after skin cancer. It occurs when cells grow out of control within the breasts. If it is not diagnosed early, the cancer cells can spread to other parts of the body.



### Know the signs and symptoms of breast cancer:

- New lump in the breast or underarm (armpit)
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast
- Pulling in of the nipple
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood
- Any change in the size or shape of the breast
- Pain in the breast

### Who should be screened?

It is recommended women begin screening for breast cancer after they turn 50 years old. If a woman had a parent, sibling, or child diagnosed with breast cancer, they should talk to their doctor about getting screened earlier or contact the resources included below if they don't have a regular doctor. A mammogram machine is used to screen for breast cancer.

### Steps to reduce your cancer risk

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Avoid alcoholic beverages
- Exercise regularly
- Get screened regularly for early detection

## Cervical cancer

Cervical cancer occurs in the cervix, which is the narrow, lower end of the uterus that connects to the vagina. About 12,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year. The main cause of cervical cancer is the human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a common sexually transmitted infection.

### Know the signs and symptoms of cervical cancer:

Early cervical cancer may not have any signs or symptoms. Advanced cervical cancer can cause abnormal bleeding, such as bleeding after sex, or discharge from the vagina.

### Who should be screened?

It is recommended every woman between the ages of 21 and 29 have a Pap test done. A Pap test is the most reliable and effective screening test available. If the results are normal, retest every 3 years.

Women 30 years and older may choose to have a Pap test, HPV test, or both. After 30, a woman with normal test results has a very low chance of being diagnosed with cervical cancer in the next few years. Her doctor may recommend screening be done every 5 years rather than 3 years.

## Cervical cancer continued

### Steps to reduce your cervical cancer risk:

- Get a Pap and/or HPV test regularly. If the results are not normal, follow up with your doctor.
- Get the HPV vaccine. It protects against HPV that most often causes cancer.
- Avoid smoking
- Use condoms during sex
- Limit your number of sexual partner



## Resources

### For help to quit smoking

Call: 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

Text: 333888

Scan the QR code to learn more:



### National Cancer Institute (NCI)

NCI's Cancer Information Service

Call: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

Scan the QR code to live chat:



### University of Utah - Huntsman Cancer Institute

Cancer Learning Center

Call: 1-888-424-2100 toll free

Text: 801-528-1112

Scan the QR code to learn more:



### American Cancer Society

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

Call: 1-800-227-2345

Scan the QR codes to learn more:

Colorectal  
Cancer



Breast  
Cancer



Cervical  
Cancer

