

Determine What Tests You Need to Find Cancer Early with the Great American Health Check

The American Cancer Society Great American Health Check Provides a Personalized Action Plan to Find Specific Cancers Early

ATLANTA 2008/01/17 -The American Cancer Society is kicking off a healthy New Year with the Great American Health Check on January 17 by urging Americans to remember one important message: getting the appropriate cancer screening tests that can detect the disease at its earliest, most treatable stage can save lives. The Great American Health Check focuses on the importance of prevention and early detection by helping consumers understand what cancer tests are right for them and how to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors throughout the year that may reduce their risk of the disease.

The Great American Health Check consists of an online health tool available at [Great American Health Check](#), where users can access a personalized guide on which cancer screening tests are appropriate, as well as healthy behavior recommendations based on their responses. Easy-to-use and confidential, this interactive online tool allows users to enter age, gender, height, weight, dietary habits, physical activity levels, and alcohol and tobacco use for themselves or a loved one. The tool in turn provides recommendations for diet, physical activity, and tobacco cessation to help lower a person's risk for certain cancers, and the resulting health action plan that is created can be shared with one's doctor.

According to Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Facts & Figures 2007, much of the suffering and death from cancer could be prevented by more systematic efforts to reduce tobacco use, improve diet and physical activity, and expand the use of established screening tests. At least 50 percent of more than 500,000 cancer deaths in the U.S. in 2007 can be attributed to poor diet, physical inactivity, exposure to tobacco products, and lack of regular cancer screening tests.

"We know that prevention and early detection works in reducing deaths from cancer, and the good news is that individuals can use this knowledge to help reduce their cancer risk," said Elmer Huerta, MD, president of the American Cancer Society. "The Great American Health Check gives people the opportunity to take charge of their health, including making lifestyle changes that can make a big difference and possibly reduce their risk of cancer and other diseases."

Although inherited genes do influence cancer risk, behavioral factors such as cigarette smoking, certain dietary patterns, physical activity, and weight control can substantially affect the risk of developing cancer. There is strong scientific evidence that healthy dietary patterns such as eating five or more servings of vegetables and fruits each day, in combination with regular physical activity, are needed to maintain a healthy body weight and reduce cancer risk.

In addition, screening can detect cancers of the breast, colon, rectum, cervix, prostate, oral cavity and skin at early stages, when treatment is more likely to be successful. Furthermore, tests for cervical and colorectal cancer may detect changes in cells before they become cancerous. The five-year survival rate for cancers that can be prevented or detected earlier by screening is about 86 percent, a percentage which reflects real reductions in cancer deaths as well as earlier diagnosis because of screening.

The Great American Health Check is part of the American Cancer Society Great American Health Challenge, a year-round initiative that encourages Americans to adopt healthy lifestyles to reduce their risk of cancer. More information on the Great American Health Challenge is available at [Great American Health Challenge](#) or by calling 1-800-ACS-2345.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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