

Cancer and our Environment

EARTH DAY 2020

This lesson will address the concerns and connections between cancer and our environment. Certain substances in our environments, such as air pollutants, bacteria in our water, and pesticides on our foods, are all likely to increase the risk of developing cancer to those exposed. Exposure to a wide variety of natural and man-made substances in the environment accounts for at least two-thirds of all the cases of cancer in the United States.

Participants will learn

ways to better care for Earth and its environment while reducing their cancer risk.

What Can We Do?

We can each do our part to create a healthier community, a healthier environment, and a healthier Earth. Below are a few tips to get you started. And, remember your actions not only impact your health, but also the health of others.

#1 *Avoid secondhand smoke/vape indoors.*

Reduce air pollution, indoor and outdoor. Both can increase the risk of cancer and diseases such as respiratory and heart diseases. One of the main sources of indoor air pollution is second-hand smoke from cigarettes. Second-hand smoke can cause lung cancer and other health problems like heart disease. Most exposure to second-hand smoke happens in the home and is particularly dangerous for children. With the increased use of e-cigarettes and vaping products, we must also be cautious of exposure to second-hand vape and its harmful effects.

#2 *Choose alternative transportation methods.*

As individuals we can all play our part to help reduce air pollution by creating less of it. Choosing active travel options like walking or cycling rather than using cars, can help reduce pollution levels from transport AND it is a great way to be more active. As we probably already know, exercise and physical activity is one of the best ways one can reduce their own cancer risk.

#3 Reduce Your Own Waste.

Match Accordingly.

a. Reduce	"No straw please" when at restaurants.
b. Reuse	Minimize your use of single-use products, such as plastic cutlery or paper plates.
c. Refuse	Pick up trash in your neighborhood, parks, or beaches.
d. Remove	Bring your own shopping bag to the grocery or purchase your own reusable water bottle.
e. Recycle	Recovering scrap or waste and reprocessing the material into useful products.

#4 Rally. Advocate. Make a Difference.

If you want to get more involved for Earth Day, check out the website below for ideas.

<https://www.earthday.org/take-action-now/>

Everyone has a right to be healthy.

SOURCES

NCI and NIEHS: Cancer and the Environment

https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/cancer_and_the_environment_508.pdf

CDC: What is Environmental Public Health?

<https://blogs.cdc.gov/yourhealthyourenvironment/2012/04/09/earth-day-what-is-environmental-public-health/>

National Earth Day

<https://www.earthday.org/what-you-can-do-to-reduce-your-own-waste/>

UK Cancer Research: How Can Air Pollution Cause Cancer?

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/air-pollution-radon-gas-and-cancer/how-can-air-pollution-cause-cancer>