Cancer prevention and screening

Use this guide to prepare for a primary-care visit in Ontario.

Ways to lower risk

- Ask about support to stop smoking or reduce second-hand smoke exposure.
- Discuss alcohol, regular movement and a varied eating pattern in ways that fit your life.
- Ask about HPV and hepatitis B vaccination, sun protection, radon or workplace exposures.

What to discuss about screening

Ontario has screening programs for breast, cervical, colorectal and lung cancer. The body area, age, family history, prior results and health goals can change the conversation.

- Breast screening uses mammography. Cervical screening uses an HPV test.
- At average risk, colorectal screening commonly uses a stool test called FIT. The lung program uses low-dose CT for people who meet its criteria.
- PSA is a separate decision to discuss. Ask about benefits, false positives and overdiagnosis.

If something has changed

Bring up new or persistent symptoms even if a screening test was normal. A lump, bleeding or another change may need clinical assessment.

Sources

Ontario screening programs Canadian Cancer Society prevention Between Visits screening map and warning signs

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General health information only. This page does not diagnose a condition or replace an assessment by a qualified clinician.