

BODY WEIGHT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, DIET & ALCOHOL

Excess body weight, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity are important modifiable cancer risk factors.

Excess body weight (i.e., overweight and obesity) increases risk of 13 types of cancer, and in 2012 accounted for 3.6% of all new cancer cases among adults worldwide. The global prevalence of excess body weight has increased: in 2016 an estimated

39% of men and 40% of women aged 18 years and older, and 27% of boys and 24% of girls aged 5-18 years, were obese. **MAP 5.1** High amounts of sugar-sweetened beverages, and sedentary behaviors, including screen-time, increase risk of excess body weight, whereas aerobic physical activity, including walking, reduces risk. **FIGURE 5.1**

Alcohol consumption is known to cause cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, liver, colon, rectum, and female breast. Worldwide, in 2016, 4.2% of cancer deaths were attributed to alcohol consumption. **FIGURE 5.2**

Independent of effects on body weight, a healthy dietary pattern rich in plant foods, including fruits, non-starchy vegetables, whole grains, and legumes (e.g., beans), and low in red and processed meats, reduces risk of certain cancers, particularly colorectal cancer.

Independent of effects on body weight, physical activity reduces risk of some types of cancer, specifically colon, and among women, breast and endometrial cancer. Globally, 23% of adults did not meet World Health Organization physical activity guidelines in 2010, and more than 80% of adolescents were insufficiently physically active.

Reversing the obesity epidemic, limiting alcohol consumption (among those who drink), and increasing the prevalence of healthy eating and active living hold considerable potential for reducing cancer incidence and mortality, which will require a comprehensive approach involving actions by institutions and individuals at all levels from national to local communities.

FIGURE 5.1
Cancer Prevention Recommendations of the World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research

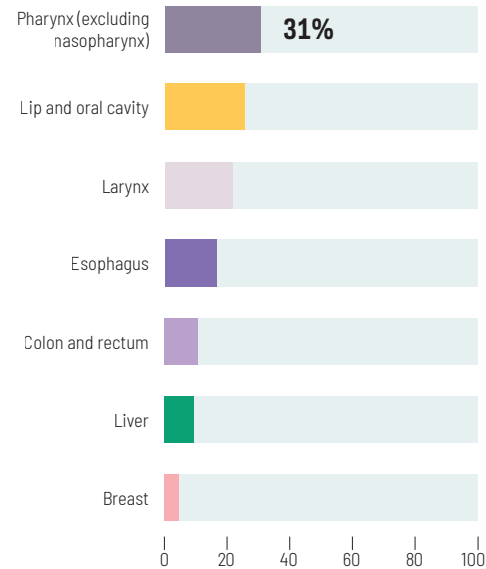


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Movement is a medicine for creating change in a person's physical, emotional, and mental states.

— Carol Welch, biosomatics instructor.

FIGURE 5.2
Proportion of cancer deaths attributable to alcohol (%) by site, 2016



The International Agency for Research on Cancer has concluded that alcoholic beverage consumption causes at least seven types of cancer.

MAP 5.1
International variation in the prevalence of obesity by sex, 2016

