

Obesity Facts: Overweight/Obesity & Cancer Risk



Overweight and obesity are associated with at least 13 types of cancer.

13

Being overweight or obese is a risk factor for cancer.

The link between cancer and overweight/obesity is clear. Excess body weight is associated with an increased risk of at least 13 different cancers.¹

About 40% of all diagnosed cancers are linked to overweight/obesity.² However, less than a third of Americans realize that obesity increases cancer risk.³

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Alaska.

1 in 5 About 1 in every 5 deaths among Alaska adults is caused by cancer⁴

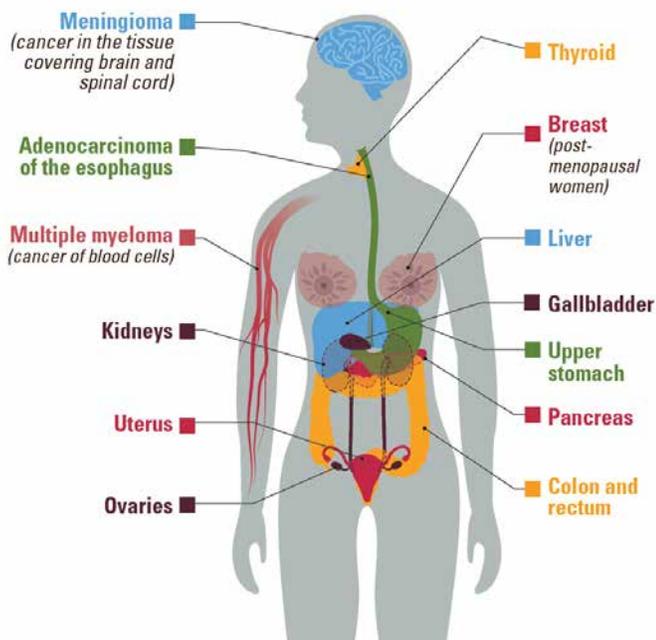
About 2 in 3 Alaska adults are overweight or obese⁵

2 in 3

Screen for cancer and maintain a healthy body weight.

Maintain a healthy body weight to reduce your risk of obesity-related cancer. Adults should receive regular screenings for colorectal, breast, and cervical cancer. Talk with your health care provider about appropriate cancer screenings and strategies to maintain a healthy body weight.

13 cancers are associated with overweight and obesity



Infographic from CDC Vital Signs - Cancer and Obesity.

Cancers Associated with Overweight/Obesity

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Alaska women.⁶ Postmenopausal women who are overweight or obese have a 20% to 40% increased risk of breast cancer.⁷

Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is the third leading cancer diagnosed in Alaska, with rates nearly three times higher among Alaska Native people than white and Asian/Pacific Islander Alaskans.⁶ People who are obese are about 30% more at risk of colorectal cancer.⁷

Kidney Cancer

Kidney cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer in Alaska.⁶ People who are overweight or obese are at almost twice the risk of the most common form of kidney cancer.⁷

Pancreatic cancer

Pancreatic cancer was the fourth leading cause of cancer death in Alaska between 2006-2015.⁸ People who are overweight or obese are at about 1.5 times greater risk of pancreatic cancer.⁷

Liver cancer

Liver cancer caused an estimated 454 deaths in Alaska between 1996-2015.⁹ People who are overweight or obese have up to twice the risk of liver cancer.⁷

Esophageal cancer

Esophageal cancer caused an estimated 444 deaths in Alaska between 1996-2015.⁹ People who are overweight or obese are at about twice the risk of esophageal cancer.⁷

What can we do?

Healthcare providers:¹⁰

- Measure patients' weight and height, and calculate their Body Mass Index (BMI).¹¹
- Talk to patients about maintaining a healthy weight and explain that excess weight increases cancer risk.
- Connect patients to resources that will help them access healthy foods and be physically active.



Community partners and public health professionals:¹⁰

- Partner to create safe communities where it's easier to be physically active and choose healthy food options.



Individuals:

Reduce your risk of obesity-related cancer:

- Maintain a healthy body weight.¹²
- Choose healthy foods and drinks, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Limit sugary drinks, alcohol, and red or processed meats.¹²
- Be physically active for at least 60 minutes a day for children, and 150 minutes every week for adults.¹³

Other ways to reduce your cancer risk:

- Stay tobacco free or quit tobacco.¹²
- Protect yourself from the sun and avoid tanning beds.¹²
- Get vaccinated to prevent cancers related to human papillomavirus (HPV) and Hepatitis B virus.¹²
- Get appropriate cancer screenings, including:
 - a mammogram every two years for women ages 50-74.¹⁴
 - a Pap smear every three years for women ages 21-65. Between ages 30-65, this could be every five years with a negative HPV test.¹⁴
 - colorectal cancer screening ages 50-75, or beginning at age 40 if you're Alaska Native or at higher risk.¹⁵



National Resources:

Learn more about obesity and cancer online:

- **Centers for Disease Control, Cancer and Obesity:** www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/obesity-cancer
- **National Cancer Institute, Obesity and Cancer:** www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/obesity/obesity-fact-sheet#q3
- **MD Anderson Cancer Center: How does obesity cause cancer?** www.mdanderson.org/publications/focused-on-health/June2017/how-does-obesity-cause-cancer.html
- **American Cancer Society: Does body weight affect cancer risk?** www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/diet-physical-activity/body-weight-and-cancer-risk/effects



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Alaska Resources:

Learn about obesity and cancer in Alaska:

- **Alaska Cancer Control and Prevention:** www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Cancer/
- **Alaska Obesity Prevention and Control Program:** www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Obesity/
- **Play Every Day:** www.playeveryday.alaska.gov

Learn more about tobacco prevention:

- **Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program:** www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/
- **Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line:** www.alaskaquitline.com
- **Tobacco-Free Alaska:** www.tobaccofree.alaska.gov



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