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Can Cancers in Adolescents Be Prevented?

Most cancers in teens do not have a known cause, so it's not possible to prevent all of them. But there are things that can be done to help prevent some of them.

- [Limiting lifestyle-related and environmental risk factors](#)
- [Vaccines to help prevent cancer](#)
- [Preventive surgery](#)

Limiting lifestyle-related and environmental risk factors

Unlike with many cancers in older adults, lifestyle-related risk factors (such as smoking) are not thought to play much of a role in cancers in teens. A few environmental factors, such as [radiation exposure](#)¹, have been linked with cancer risk in teens. But some exposures may be unavoidable, such as if a child needs radiation therapy to treat cancer.

There are some things you can do to lower your risk of getting certain kinds of cancer, such as:

- [Not smoking](#)²
- [Limiting time spent in the sun and avoiding tanning salons](#)³
- Limiting the number of sex partners and using safer sex practices, which can lower the risk of some infections linked to cancer, such as [human papillomavirus \(HPV\)](#)⁴ and [human immunodeficiency virus \(HIV\)](#)⁵

While lifestyle-related and environmental risk factors don't have a large effect on cancers in teens, exposure to these risk factors during the teenage years can still

increase a person's risk of getting cancer as they get older. It's important to develop and maintain healthy habits early in life, such as not smoking, staying at a healthy weight,

References

Bleyer A. Young adult oncology: The patients and their survival challenges. *CA Cancer J Clin.* 2007;57:242-255.

Saslow D, Andrews KS, Manassaram-Baptiste D, et al. Human papillomavirus vaccination 2020 guideline update: American Cancer Society guideline adaptation. *CA Cancer J Clin*