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February is National Cancer Prevention Month

According to the American Cancer Society in 2017, 1 in 4 deaths in the state of California were due to some form of cancer. This is an extremely high number when you consider that many forms of cancer are relatively easy to spot if people are properly screened often. This month we want to help our community of Fontana become more aware of cancer and how screening can be very beneficial in preventing further disease.

First, let's look at what exactly cancer is and try to think about it in easy to understand terms. Picture our body as a bustling city of trillions of cells. Normally, these cells follow the rules -- they grow, multiply, and make way for new cells as needed. However, sometimes, things get messy.

The usual order of cell growth and division breaks down and some cells start misbehaving. Instead of retiring gracefully, old or damaged cells stick around and even bring friends. These unruly cells can form lumps of tissue called tumors. Now, tumors come in two flavors: cancerous and not-so-cancerous (benign).

The troublemakers, known as cancerous tumors, don't just stay put; they invade nearby areas and may even embark on a journey to set up shop elsewhere in the body (a fancy term for this is metastasis). On the other hand, the benign tumors are more laid back -- they don't invade and usually behave. When we remove them, they usually don't make a comeback, unlike their rowdy counterparts.

While cancer often shows up as solid tumors, some, like blood cancers (leukemias), prefer to keep things liquid. It is essential to know that benign tumors, although not as troublesome as cancerous ones, can still cause problems especially when they decide to camp out in important places like the brain.

So, that's the scoop on cancer -- a bit of a cellular rebellion that can create chaos. However, with understanding, one can better navigate this complex landscape and work towards keeping our bodies in harmony.

How Can We Prevent Cancer?

Cancer has many ways of developing and there are some forms of cancer where their origins are unknown. Other cancers we can assume responsibility due to certain substances or behaviors, such as lung cancer that can be caused by smoking and second hand smoke.

Let's discuss a few ways that one can develop habits that will help prevent or reduce the effects that cancer can have.

- **Kick the Tobacco Habit**
 - Smoking and even secondhand smoke increases cancer risks. So, say "no" to tobacco. If you need help quitting, ask your healthcare provider for support and resources.
- **Nourish with A Healthy Diet**
 - There's power in plants. Focus on fruits, veggies, whole grains, and beans. Limit sugars, animal fats, and processed meats.
 - Cheers in moderation: If you drink, do it moderately. Excessive alcohol intake can increase your risk of cancer.
- **Move Towards A Healthy Weight**
 - Maintaining a healthy weight lowers cancer risks.
 - Stay active: Physical activity, even in small doses, helps. Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity a day.
- **Sun Safety First**
 - Shield yourself from the sun between 10am-4pm; that's when the rays are the strongest.
 - Wear protective clothing, sunglasses, and sunscreen (SPF 30 or more).
 - Avoid tanning beds. They're as harmful as sunlight.
- **Guard Against Viral Threats**
 - Hepatitis B and HPV vaccines protect against liver and cervical cancers.
 - Check with your healthcare provider, especially if you're in a high-risk group.
- **Steer Clear of Risky Behaviors**
 - Avoid sharing needles to prevent infections that increase risk of cancer.
- **Embrace Regular Medical Check-ups**
 - Regular self-exams and screenings (skin, colon, cervix, breast) increase chances of early cancer detection. Discuss the best screening schedule for you with your healthcare provider.

As you can see, there are many ways to prevent cancer. In fact, Fontana offers many programs to help prevent cancer such as growing your own fruits and vegetables in the City's community garden. You can also get and stay active by joining the City's community walking program, [Fontana Walks!](#) Need to buy food? Visit the weekly Farmers' Markets to buy food for yourself and your family. The more one can reduce unhealthy habits and increase healthy habits, the better you can strengthen your body to fight off cancer.

As you consider lifestyle changes, make sure a healthy diet is one of the ones on top of your list.

Here's a list of foods to help you reduce the risk of cancer:

- **Dark Green Leafy Vegetables**
 - Why? Rich in fiber, folate, and various nutrients linked to lower cancer risk.
- **Whole Grains**
 - Why? Packed with dietary fiber, reduces the risk of colorectal cancer.
- **Fruits & Berries**
 - Why? Loaded with antioxidants and cancer-fighting nutrients.
 - Tip: Blueberries, high in antioxidants, combat illness and support cancer prevention.
- **Cruciferous Vegetables**
 - This category includes broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts.
 - These vegetables contain compounds with proven anticancer properties.
- **Legumes**
 - Includes beans and lentils.
 - These are excellent sources of fiber and protein, contributing to lower cancer risk.
- **Fatty Fish**
 - Includes salmon, mackerel, sardines.
 - Omega-3 fatty acids in fatty fish have been linked to decreased cancer risk.

Mind your intake: Limit excessive alcohol, processed meats, red meats, and sugary drinks. Overconsumption increases the risk of cancer.

Let your plate be your shield against cancer. Incorporate these nutrient-rich foods for a healthier, cancer-resistant lifestyle.

For more information:

[National Cancer Institute: What is Cancer?](#)

[Mayo Clinic: Cancer prevention: 7 tips to reduce your risk](#)

[UC Davis: Comprehensive Cancer Center: Cancer in California](#)

[American Cancer Society: California Cancer Facts & Figures](#)

Visit your doctor and find out what cancer screening methods are right for you as some tests are recommended for certain age ranges.

Featured Recipe: Masala Omelette

Prep Time: 5 minutes | Cook Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 1

Ingredients

- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped onion
- 1/2 red pepper, seeds removed, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander
- 1 green chili finely chopped (or to taste)
- 1 chopped tomato
- 1 teaspoon grapeseed oil



Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients (except oil) in a bowl and mix well.

2. Put oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium-hot heat. When hot, pour in egg mixture.
3. Keep mixing egg while solidifying. When semi-solid, let the egg form into an omelette shape.
4. Turn the omelette over and press down.
5. Remove omelette when cooked through and serve immediately.

Day Observances

- [Feb. 2nd: National Women's Heart Day](#)
- [Feb. 7th: National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)
- [Feb. 15th: World Cholangiocarcinoma Day](#)
- [Feb. 22nd: National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day](#)

Weekly Observances

- [February 7th-14th: Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Week](#)
- [February 26th-March 3rd: National Eating Disorders Awareness Week](#)

Monthly Observances

- [American Heart Month](#)
- [Black History Month](#)
- [Canned Food Month](#)
- [National Children's Dental Health Month](#)
- [National Self Check Month](#)

** Upcoming Events**

****Times/Locations Subject to Change**
****Events may also be cancelled due to inclement weather.**

Visit Healthy Fontana at one (or all) of these upcoming events for FREE resources and giveaways!

- **Saturday, February 10th** | [Fontana Walks!](#) | Miller Park Amphitheater, 8-9am
- **Thursdays, February 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th** | [Fontana Farmers' Market](#) | Southridge Park, 2pm-7pm
 - ****February 1st: Cancelled due to inclement weather**
- **Sundays, February 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th** | [Fontana Farmers' Market](#) | Fontana Park, 10am-3pm



Connect With Us!

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