

THE MANUAL

FOR MEN ON CANCER PREVENTION AND EARLY DETECTION



**It's time for
your NCT
...WHY
WEIGHT?**

Mister Myths
What you think you
know about cancer

**Reducing
the Risks**

A HEALTH INFORMATION BOOKLET PRODUCED BY



irish cancer society



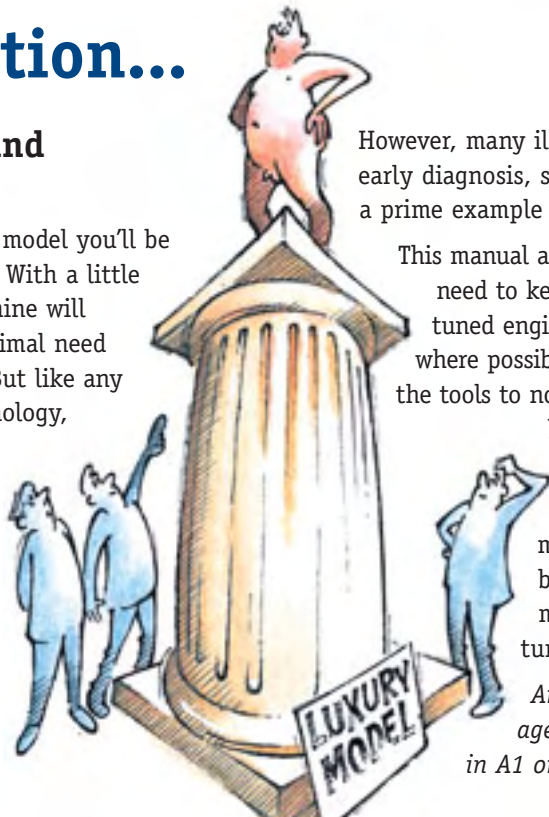
Man and His Machine

An introduction...

Man #1 has been around for a very long time.

As the proud owner of the latest model you'll be keen to keep it in top condition. With a little care your high performance machine will last you a long lifetime with minimal need for maintenance or spare parts. But like any sophisticated piece of high technology, your body will respond best to a basic understanding of what goes on underneath the bonnet.

In truth, men are more likely to look after their cars than their own bodies. Of course, NCTs are also required by law for your car but there is no such equivalent for the driver.



However, many illnesses can be prevented and with early diagnosis, successfully treated. Cancer is a prime example of this.

This manual arms you with the information you need to keep your body humming like a finely tuned engine, so you can reduce your risk, and where possible, prevent cancer. It also gives you the tools to notice early warning signs that need to be checked out, so that little problems don't become big problems.

By following the guidelines in this manual you can be more than just a bog standard model. You can be more, much more. You can be a highly tuned man machine.

And you might just reach retirement age as a highly prized vintage model in A1 order.

The Irish Cancer Society is the national charity for cancer care. Funded entirely by donations from the public, its work is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem and improving the lives of those living with cancer, through patient care, research and education.

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MISTER MYTHS

Remember the old myth that cars can run on water? Then they found out engines actually do work better in the rain because damp air makes the fuel burn more efficiently.

Well, cancer has its own myths and old wives tales. It turns out that some of these myths are partly true – but others are definitely false...

? You can catch cancer from other people:
False. Cancer itself is not contagious.

? Pesticides cause cancer:
A long runner this one but without good support. What we do know is there are clear links between many industrial chemicals and some cancers. So if you work with these chemicals, wear protective gear.

? Mobile phones cause brain tumours:
Not proven, but the monthly bills can be pretty life threatening!

? Masturbation causes testicular or prostate cancer:
Definitely false!

? Tight underpants cause testicular cancer:
False and yet falsetto.

? Regularly eating burnt meat cooked on a BBQ won't increase your risk for cancer:
False. Eating burnt meat regularly can increase your risk for cancer.

? Men don't get breast cancer:
Sadly untrue, but it is quite rare.

? Women have prostates but they don't cause as much trouble:
A survey found that over 50% of men believe women have prostates. But it's false. Which is great news, otherwise more people might have to get up in the middle of the night for a pee!



What are the Odds?

Your risks explained...

Some dangers to health and life are very serious but the risk of actually suffering from them may be very small. These risks can be difficult to work out. It can also be very confusing trying to compare risks.

For example, the risk of being killed by lightning in Ireland is 1 in 10 million. This doesn't mean very much to most of us. So try thinking about it this way:

If there was a line of people 10,000 kilometres (6,210 miles) long, only one person in the line would be killed by lightning. It would take 4 months of continuous walking to reach the end of the line.

On the other hand, if you smoke 10 cigarettes a day, you have a 1 in 200 chance of dying earlier. You would be in a line of people only 200 metres (218 yards) long. It would take you only 4 minutes to walk from the beginning to the end.

Now it starts to make sense.

Reducing your risks

You cannot easily avoid some of the risks to your health. Many risks are so small it makes little sense to try to avoid them.

But there are some very high risks that are partly or totally avoidable.

Tobacco smoking is a good example. There is a real and significant risk from inhaling other people's

smoke (passive smoking). But you can often avoid passive smoking. Of course, the risk to your health is even greater if you smoke yourself – which is completely avoidable.

There are many ways that you can avoid risks to your health – either partly or totally. But the Big Five are the most important:

- **What you eat**
- **What you drink**
- **Whether you smoke**
- **How active you are**
- **How you look after yourself in the sun**

You can reduce your risk further by:

- having regular GP check-ups; *and*
- being more aware of early signs and symptoms of ill health.



POWER FOR POWERFUL MEN

Reducing your risk of cancer

DRINKING IT...

High-octane fuel: low performance

Nothing's sadder than a foot hard down on the pedal and nothing happens.

The great myth is that alcohol improves performance. Not so.

HOW MUCH?

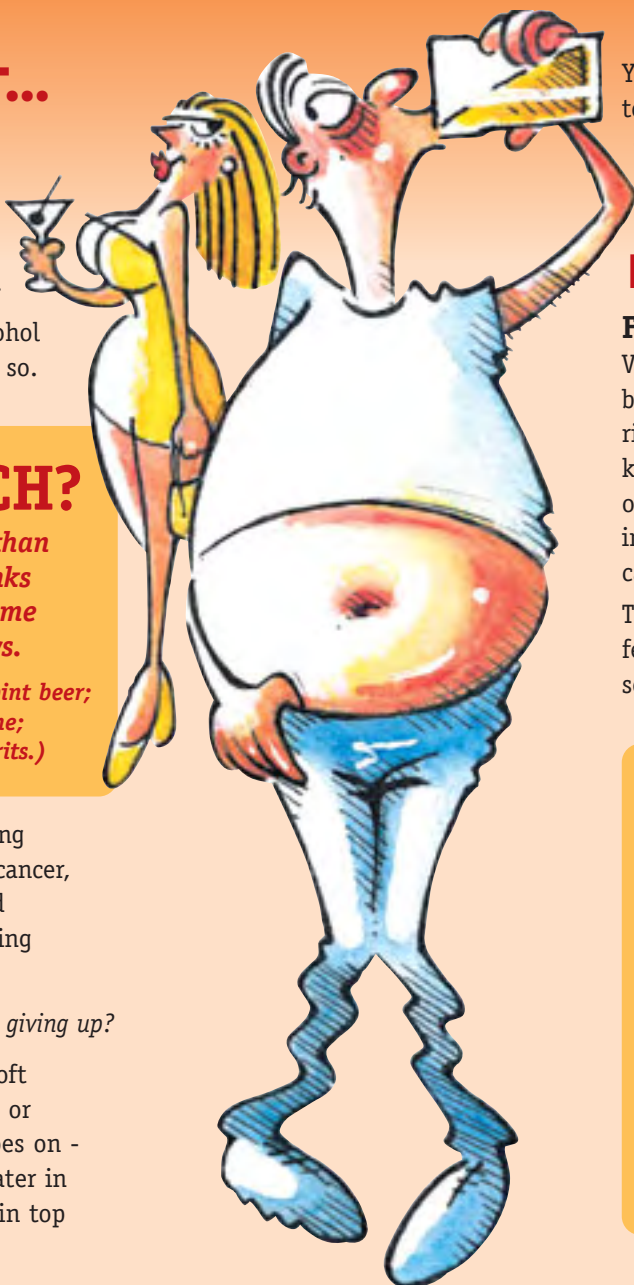
*Aim for no more than
14 standard drinks
per week with some
alcohol-free days.*

*(1 standard drink = 1/2 pint beer;
a small glass of wine;
1 pub measure of spirits.)*

Alcohol is high in gut-adding calories, and it's linked to cancer, liver conditions, high blood pressure and of course, failing to rise to the occasion.

But who said anything about giving up?

Instead, try switching to soft drinks, non alcoholic beers or shandies as the evening goes on - or have a few glasses of water in between to help keep you in top gear for the whole night.



You might be in the right condition to see that your mates are doing exactly the same thing for the same reason.

EATING IT...

Fuel Foods

Vegetables, fruits, pulses (peas and beans) and wholegrain bread, brown rice or durum wheat pasta, help keep energy flowing without piling on the weight. And as they are lower in calories and higher in fibre, they can also protect you from cancer.

The great thing is they make you feel as though you have a full tank so you're less hungry.

CARBS FOR YOUR ENGINE:

Carbohydrates are the power fuel. You put your foot down and feel the push.

Fats are more suited to tractors. Great for slow, heavy machinery. So remember fruit, vegetables and high fibre for maximum speed and energy.

Try to increase your fruit and veg to 5 or more portions a day and your high fibre bread, cereals, pasta and potatoes to 6 or more a day.

Meat and potatoes anyone?

Not a vegetarian? No problem. You don't need to miss out on the meat option. Like many things in life, lean meat is good for you in moderation. So if you go for a portion about the size of a deck of cards you will come up trumps.

Fat but fit?

Us guys eat too much fat. You can be fit and fat. But the extra fat will still cause you problems such as high blood pressure and heart disease. It will also increase your risk of cancer.

IF YOU FANCY MEAT...

What's important is the mix of food on your plate. The ideal mix is one-third or less of meat, chicken or fish and two-thirds of vegetables and pasta or rice.

Not that all fat is bad. Some fat actually helps reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer. The amount and type that we eat makes all the difference. Saturated fat clogs the fuel lines so go for unsaturated fat like olive oil.

Food labels must by law show the amount of fat. Limit foods with over 19g of fat per 100g of food or over 5g of saturated fat per 100g of food.

Aim for less than 3g of fat and under 2g of saturated fat per 100g of food.

Revving it up

A stressful life often means you eat on your feet. Not all of us have the luxury of sit down meals during the

Take away foods, sausage rolls, pastries, cakes and ready-made meals often contain high levels of saturated fat. Avoid adding fat to food when you cook at home. Try not to fry. Boil, bake or grill instead.

day, but this doesn't mean the upright meal has to be downright dangerous. You can choose healthy foods that reduce your health risks. If you do, you'll also reduce your stress.

Supermarket, or restaurant salad bars can be a green light for the man on the move. Gone are the days of boring dry leaves. The modern salad is crunchy, calorie light and currency easy.

Why watch television chefs when you can do better? Get a wok and reduce your workload. Throw in thin sliced vegetables, some lean meat and a light coating of olive oil and serve with rice. Presto! A TV meal. Follow up with fresh fruit in a bowl of yoghurt. If you cook like this, you can get a big meal with change out of a €5 note.



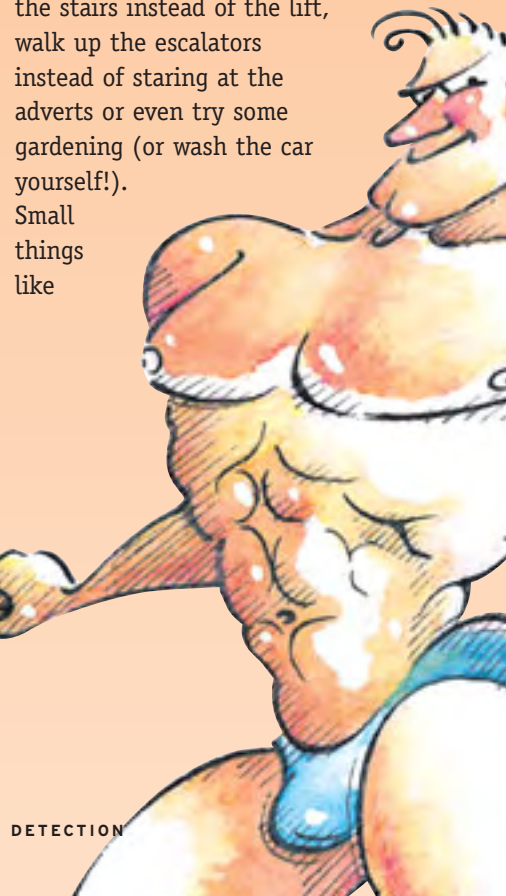
KEEPING IT RUNNING...

Leaves you breathless

Getting fit doesn't mean you have to spend your time in a room full of machines last seen in the Chamber of Horrors. Charity shops are full of fitness equipment bought by well meaning men (or their partners).

Sport is a great way of keeping fit but most of us overestimate what we need to do to stay healthy. All you need is about 30 minutes of physical activity most days to help reduce your risk from heart disease and some cancers.

But any activity is of some benefit, whether at work, leisure or a sport. So try walking to the next bus stop and get off one stop early, use the stairs instead of the lift, walk up the escalators instead of staring at the adverts or even try some gardening (or wash the car yourself!). Small things like

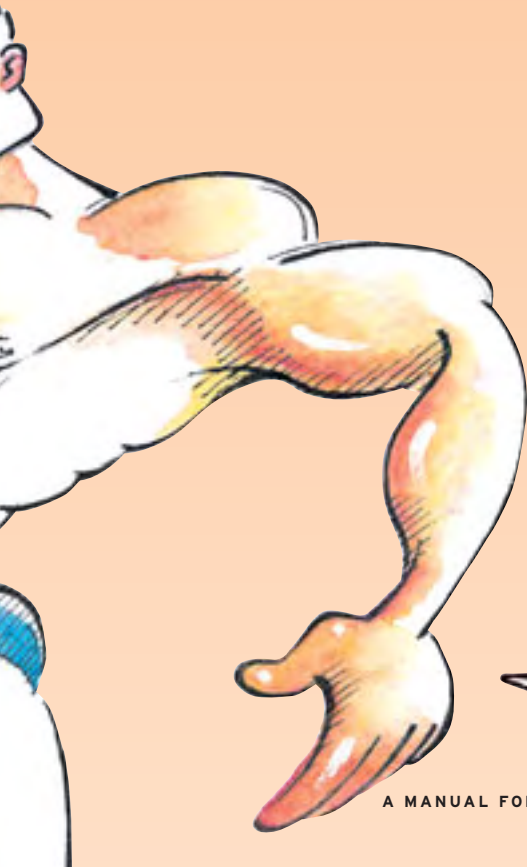


BE ACTIVE!

Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity per day – anything that makes the heart beat a little faster or brings a little sweat to your brow. You can spread the activity over one or more sessions. This will help keep the spare tyre away and the engine ticking over!

these will make activity with your mates or kids that much easier and less embarrassing.

Being able to push-start the car without needing oxygen afterwards always looks good and being this fit can have a remarkable effect on the spare tyre too. Of course, keeping your weight under control also helps prevent cancer. If your belt size is over 40 inches (100cm) you are significantly increasing your risk. And this rises as your belt size goes up.



SMOKING IT...

Even filters won't stop this one.

Smoke should leave a finely tuned engine not enter it. Tobacco kills more men in the world each year than WWII, murder, rival football supporters and teenage daughters' telephone bills combined!!

Low tar products or filters only con you. The simple fact of the matter is that smoking kills, be it from cancer or heart disease. Not a lot of men know this, but it is also one of the major causes of erectile dysfunction (one type of impotence). Perhaps that's why the film stars tend to smoke after the steamy love scene rather than before!

If you smoke 20 cigarettes a day, you will save €2,281 each year if you quit. In 5 years you could buy a half-decent car and in ten years a nice sports model! Since the price of tobacco continues to rise, quitting could buy you a serious motor.

If you smoke quitting is the most effective step you can take to reduce your risk of cancer – and not just lung cancer. So set a date to quit.



BURNING IT...

Skin cancer is on the increase and is already the commonest cancer in Ireland. It is almost always caused by over-exposure to the sun, so protect your bodywork.

- Use high factor sun-screens (15+). Slap loads on **before** you head into the sun and reapply it every 2 hours and after you swim.
- Cover up, **always**, whether at work, play or on holiday.
- Get a hat, a big hat (to cover ears, nose and neck).
- Stay out of the midday sun. If you are outside, look for a nice bit of shade to relax or work in.
- Get those shades on to protect your (next) best assets – your eyes!

SUN SMART

Every man needs to be sun smart. But be extra careful both in Ireland and abroad if you have:

- *pale or freckled skin that doesn't tan or burns before it tans;*
- *naturally red or fair hair and blue, green or grey eyes;*
- *50 or more moles;*
- *skin that burns easily, a history of sunburn or skin cancer.*

Only an eejit keeps driving when the dashboard lights up like a Christmas tree! Ignoring the body's early warning signs is an equally bad idea. It could mean an early trip to the garage for some vital spare parts.



Getting your NCT

DETECTING CANCER EARLY

Some regular DIY checks:

1 ATTEND YOUR NCT

The NCT test keeps you safely on the road and can pick up faults before they become dangerous. Regular check-ups by your own GP can also pick up potential medical problems in the same way. Some GPs offer basic screening services. It's a good opportunity to talk about any concerns you might have and check out your risks.

2 CHECK YOUR LOGBOOK

One careful driver on the logbook? Check out your family history of cancer, especially if either of your parents suffered from a particular cancer before 60. If you do have a parent who had cancer at a young age, check with your doctor what you can do to reduce your own risk. Your doctor may suggest regular screening, which can catch potential problems early. Most cancers can be successfully treated when they are caught early. But remember, prevention is better than cure, so you should try to reduce your risks.

See page 5 to learn more.

3 KEEP A REGULAR EYE ON YOUR BODYWORK

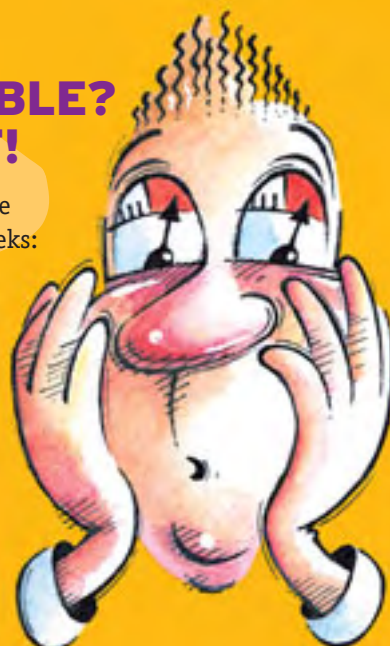
- Get to know your skin so that you'll more quickly recognise anything amiss such as:
 - new lumps or growths,
 - a sore or bruise that does not heal,
 - a mole that changes in shape, size or colour or bleeds in unusual circumstances. *See page 13 to learn more.*
- Be aware of how your balls usually feel and check them regularly for anything unusual such as a lump, thickening or swelling. *See page 12 to learn more.*

4 ENGINE TROUBLE? CHECK IT OUT!

Take action if you experience any of the following for more than a couple of weeks:

- A persistent cough or hoarseness
- Persistent indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- Shortness of breath
- Significant weight loss (for no good reason)
- Loss of appetite
- A noticeable, persistent change in bowel or bladder habits, for no good reason

Many symptoms that might indicate cancer can also be caused by a less serious illness. But it's always better to be safe. So go see your doctor if in any doubt.



Faulty Fuel Injector

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PROSTATE CANCER...

A man thing...

The prostate is a walnut sized gland that sits just under the bladder. Its job is to produce the bulk of semen to help protect and nourish sperm on their hazardous trip to the womb.

What causes it?

While nobody knows what causes prostate cancer, there are some recognised risk factors:

■ **Birthdays:** Risk increases over the age of 50 years. Prostate cancer is rare in younger men. Either buy less candles for the cake or better still eat the candles and leave the cake as a high fat diet may also be a risk factor.

■ **Family History:** If your father or brother had prostate cancer, your risk increases. If they had it at a young age, your risk is even higher.

■ **'Western diet':** High fat, lots of red meat. Countries with low fat and low meat diets have low levels of prostate cancer.

■ **Obesity:** Being overweight is a major risk factor for many cancers.



Prostate is the number two cancer among men in Ireland.

Prostate cancer is not caused by vasectomy, injury, masturbation or reading the Karma Sutra under the bedclothes with a torch. Just as well, or it could be teenagers suffering along with men predominantly aged over 50. Mind you...

Happy Birthday

As men get older, their urine flow can become slower and the bladder needs to be emptied more often. This is usually due to the prostate gland getting bigger and putting pressure on the bladder. If you need to pee more often, it does not mean that you have prostate cancer. But it is important to see the doctor and rule it out. With early discovery, prostate cancer can be treated very successfully.

Watch out for:

- *difficulty peeing with any kind of pressure;*
- *peeing more often than usual;*
- *getting up at night to have a pee only to get up again later on;*
- *a feeling that you haven't quite got rid of it all when you pee;*
- *stop-start-peeing;*
- *discomfort or burning when peeing;*
- *blood in your pee or semen.*

Getting it sorted

Get used to hearing the acronym 'PSA'. It stands for 'Prostate Specific Antigen' and is a simple blood test. That's about as simple as it gets though. A raised PSA level is usually not a sign of cancer. It can be caused by inflammation and a large but non-cancerous prostate. So before doing a PSA test with your GP talk about the meaning of the results in terms of possible treatment. Your doctor will usually carry out a physical examination as well as a blood test for PSA. If the levels are high your doctor may refer you for further tests.

If further tests show that you have prostate cancer, the treatment you are offered will depend on your age, general health and the stage or grade of the cancer. Possible treatments include surgery, radiotherapy, hormone therapy and sometimes chemotherapy.

You may be able to reduce your risk by having a balanced diet with fresh fruit and vegetables.

Tomatoes and tomato-based products reportedly can reduce your risk, so the occasional Bloody Mary may also be helpful, but preferably with less Mary!

The risk of a man getting prostate cancer is only 2% less than the risk of a woman getting breast cancer.

Poor Combustion and Backfire

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BOWEL CANCER...

The short and tall of it

The bowel is sometimes called the gut. It digests and absorbs food. There are two parts, the small and large bowel, which reflect the width of the gut rather than its length. Cancer more commonly appears in the large bowel and rectum, which is the very last part of the gut. Bowel cancer is common and treatable when it's caught early.

Causes of Bowel Cancer

The definite cause of bowel cancer is still a mystery. But we know some things do increase your risk. Your risk is higher if:

- you eat lots of junk food, fat and sugar and not enough fibre;
- someone in your close family had bowel cancer;
- you don't exercise;
- you're overweight;
- you smoke tobacco;
- you or a member of your family have a bowel condition called polyps or adenomatous polyposis. This can significantly increase your risk. Trying to pronounce it can be pretty stressful too!

The good news is you can reduce your risk, even if bowel cancer is in the family.

- Check out your diet. Reduce the amount of fat and sugars and eat more fruit, vegetables and fibre.
- Try to keep active regularly and keep your weight under control.
- Discuss your family history with your doctor. Your GP may advise more frequent tests.
- Quit smoking.
See page 11 to learn more.

Better sooner than later

Being 'bowel aware' is the name of the game. Guts play up at the best of times but there are some warning signs that you shouldn't ignore.

- bright or dark red flecks in your stools;
- a change in the way your bowels are working, which lasts more than a month. This means diarrhoea, constipation or both;
- bleeding from the back passage or blood on the toilet paper;
- a regular bloated feeling, trapped wind or fullness;
- a feeling as though there is something left to pass even after you go to the toilet;
- pain or discomfort in your belly or back passage;
- weight loss for no good reason;
- increasing general tiredness or weakness.



Remember! These symptoms don't always mean cancer. But if you have any of them, get your doctor to check them to be sure.

THE GLOVED FINGER...

Medical checks and treatment

Men die of embarrassment every single day in Ireland. Yes, having a rectal examination is not everyone's idea of a good day out but it can save your life. It is not painful and your doctor does them every day.

A sample of your bowel movement (or stool) may also be taken to check for blood, whether or not the blood is visible. This can be detected by a special test (known as a FOBT or Faecal Occult Blood Test).

If the results of these tests raise suspicions, you may need to go for further tests. These will give a better picture of what is happening in your bowel.

If you do have bowel cancer, treatment will depend on where the cancer is, whether it has spread and your general health. Surgery is the main form of treatment, but more doctors are combining it with chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Dodgy Air Filters

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LUNG CANCER...

The Smoking Gun

It's not difficult to work out what causes lung cancer. If you don't smoke your chances of getting it are very small.

Start early, die early. The amount of tobacco you smoke moves you that bit closer to the great scrap-yard in the sky.

Filters and low tar don't protect you. Wise up and stub it out.

So should you go for pipes and cigars? No way, they just give you a feeling of false security. Smoking causes cancer.

Cut down then? That doesn't work either. You gradually creep back up. Stop completely.

All over Ireland men are getting the message. That's why lung cancer in men is on the decrease. You can be one of them.

FIRST THE GOOD NEWS

Lung cancer in men is preventable and on the decrease. It is almost entirely caused by smoking.

Now the bad news: Some men think they are immune...

Quit plan

- List your reasons for quitting.
- Set a day and date to stop. Tell all your friends and relatives, they will support you.

- Get someone to quit with you. You will reinforce each other's willpower.
- Clear the house and your pockets of any packets, papers or matches.
- Map out your progress on a chart or calendar. Keep the money you save in a separate container.
- If you get a craving, practice the 4 D's: **Drink water; Deep breathe; Distract yourself** and **Delay** grabbing for that smoke for 3 minutes (cravings can take this long to disappear)
- Ask your friends not to smoke around you. People accept this far more readily than they used to do.

Watch out for:

- a persistent cough;
- coughing up blood-stained phlegm;
- shortness of breath;
- chest discomfort;
- repeated bouts of pneumonia or bronchitis;
- loss of appetite;
- loss of weight.

These don't necessarily mean you have cancer but they do need your doctor's attention.

If you have lung cancer, treatment depends on the type of cancer, how developed it is and your general state of health. Surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy may be used alone or together to treat lung cancer.

Remember! Early detection of lung cancer can make a difference in your chances of survival. If you have any of the symptoms listed above, see your doctor.

Better still, reduce your risks of getting lung cancer by stopping smoking.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

HELP ON THE WAY TO QUITTING

- **Try calling the NATIONAL SMOKERS' QUITLINE on CALLSAVE 1850 201 203. Smoking cessation counsellors are on hand with a free advice kit and confidential advice and support.**
 - **Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) can be obtained through your GP or bought over the counter in the pharmacy. Used correctly, it can be very successful in easing the cravings for nicotine. There are many types so make sure you discuss with your GP or pharmacist the best one for you.**
 - **Get in touch with self-help groups or organisations that supply information and support.**
 - **Ask your GP for advice on other methods that may help you quit.**
- If you can't stop for yourself, do it for your partner or kids.**



Ball Bearings and Shot Suspension

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TESTICULAR CANCER...

Rare but increasing

The good news is testicular cancer is rare and highly treatable. Most men who get it are cured. The bad news is it's the most common cancer in young men between 15 and 34 years in Ireland. There are around 100 cases each year, and the number is increasing steadily. This may be linked to the increasing number of undescended testicles (the testicle fails to move down into the scrotum after birth). If you had an undescended testicle, your risk is significantly higher. You also have a higher risk if your father or brother suffered from testicular cancer.

It's in your hands

Be aware of how your balls normally feel by checking them on a regular basis:

- Check your testicles about once a month, while in the bath or shower.
- Cradle your scrotum in both hands using fingers and thumbs to examine and compare your testicles. Small differences in size are normal.
- Testicles should feel smooth, with no lumps, swellings or hardening present.
- There is a soft rubbery tube at the top and back of both testicles. This is called the epididymis. It carries

Like any injury, slipping onto the crossbar of your bike doesn't increase your risk of testicular cancer – but it might extend your vocabulary.

sperm to the penis. It can be tender and it wobbles. Lumps tend to be firmly fixed to the testicle.

■ You should see your doctor if:

- you can feel a small lump or swelling in either ball;
- you notice any hardening of the testicle;
- you can feel a sensation of dragging or heaviness in your scrotum;
- you experience dull aches in the groin;
- you notice any smelly pus or blood in your semen.

Thankfully, most lumps aren't cancer. But don't ignore a lump – let your doctor decide whether you need further tests. There is a range of options for treatment. Surgery,

It's normal for one testicle to be lower than the other. It's nature's way of allowing you to cross your legs without screaming.



radiotherapy and chemotherapy may be used alone or together. All are highly effective. After treatment most men can have children and a normal sex life.

IT'S GOOD TO CHECK...

It's good to check your balls regularly.

If you do, you will be aware of any unusual changes.

But pick your time and place carefully as it can attract the wrong sort of attention on the bus!!

Once a month in the bath or shower is just about right.

Bodywork

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SKIN CANCER...

Sun Sense

The sun damages your bodywork by its Ultraviolet Radiation (UV). There are two types of UV radiation.

- UVA radiation causes early ageing and skin cancer.
- UVB radiation causes burning and skin cancer.

Tanning is a sign that damaged skin is trying to protect itself from the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Skin cancer

There are two types of skin cancer.

Non-melanoma is the most common form of skin cancer.

Watch out for:

- a new growth or sore that does not heal within four weeks;
- a spot or sore that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab or bleed;
- constant skin ulcers that are not explained by other causes.

Malignant Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer. Although it is relatively rare, it is on the increase. It most often appears as a changing mole or freckle.

Watch out for:

- **Size:** bigger than the butt end of a pencil (more than 6mm diameter);
- **Colour variety:** shades of tan, brown black and sometimes red, blue or white;
- **Shape:** ragged or scalloped edge and one half unlike the other;
- **Itchiness;**
- **Bleeding.**

Look at your moles and watch out for changes in them. Many skin changes

Follow the SunSmart Code

- **Seek shade.**
- **Slip on a t-shirt and long shorts made from closely woven fabric.**
- **Slap on a hat (that covers ears, neck and nose!)**
- **Slop on sunscreen 15+ twenty minutes before you head out, every 2 hours and after swimming.**
- **Wrap on sunglasses to protect your eyes.**
- **Avoid being in the sun 11am-3pm – that's when it is strongest.**

will be harmless. But if you notice anything unusual, you should visit your doctor. The good news is: early diagnosis is likely to lead to recovery.

Sunscreens and smokescreens

People get confused over sunscreens and can damage their skin by choosing the wrong sunscreen for them or not using enough.

Read your sunscreen label and make sure it has both an SPF and a star rating.

The SPF or Sun Protection Factor tells you how much protection you are getting from UVB rays. The star rating shows the level of protection against UVA rays. **Try to buy a sunscreen that is at least SPF 15+ and has a 4 star rating.**

Remember! Wearing sunscreen does not mean that you can stay out in the sun longer than recommended. Sunscreen offers some protection, but use it with cover-up clothing.



NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW THIS

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland, and not just in women.

Your lifetime risk as a man of developing skin cancer is one in eight.

Even cloudy days can deliver 90% of the dangerous UV rays.

Some football shirts are so thin they let almost all the sun shine through.

Skin damage remains after your sunburn fades. It builds up under the skin just like rust under bodywork paint and it can come back to haunt you in later years.

Virtually all the risk comes from the sun and sun-beds... so cover up and close up!

YOUR TOP MECHANIC

GETTING THE BEST FROM YOUR GP VISIT

- **Find a GP who suits you:** The local health board clinic keeps a list of some GPs in the area. The Golden Pages should also have a list. But asking your mates can be the best way to find your kind of doctor.
- **Write down your symptoms before you see your doctor:** It's easy to forget the most important things during a visit to the doctor. Doctors home-in on important clues. When did it start? How did it feel? Did anyone else suffer as well? Did this ever happen before? What have you done about it so far? Are you on any medicines at present? If you make a list before you go, you'll have all the answers for your doctor.
- **Be realistic:** If you come in to your doctor armed with a list of complaints as long as your arm, don't expect to get everything sorted in one visit. With an average of 10 minutes per visit you may be invited back to get through all your concerns.
- **Arrive informed:** Check out the Web for information before you go to the surgery. There are thousands of sites on health, men's health and cancer. Remember that some information on the Web is not accurate, so visit websites with a good reputation or an HON sign, which means they follow rules for presenting health information online. We recommend: www.cancer.ie or www.malehealth.co.uk for up-to-date, accurate and unbiased information (there is a list of websites at the back of this booklet). The Irish Cancer Society also has a helpline where you can get information, confidential advice or support from health professionals. The service is also available by e-mail at helpline@irishcancer.ie
- **Ask questions:** If a mechanic stuck his head into the bonnet of your car, you would most certainly want to know what he planned to do. Your doctor is about to lift the bonnet on your body – don't be afraid to ask why and what he plans to do.
- **Don't beat about the bush:** If you have a lump on your balls say so! With a short consultation time there is a real danger of coming out with a prescription for a sore nose.
- **Listen to what they say:** If you don't understand, say so. It helps if they write down the important points. Most people pick up less than half of what their doctor has told them.
- **If you want a second opinion say so:** Ask for a consultant appointment if you want a second opinion. But remember, your GP is a person with feelings and not a computer. Compliment your doctor for helping you. Then explain why you want a second opinion.

It's easy to forget the most important things during a visit to the doctor. If you make a list before you go, you'll have all the answers for your doctor.



HINT!

Your community pharmacist can also be a great source of information. They can help with your healthcare questions and advise on medicines. So get the best from your pharmacist too – they'd be happy to help!

- **Trust your doctor:** But remember, there is a difference between trust and blind faith. Your health is a partnership between you and your doctor – but it's your body.
- **Don't be afraid to ask to see your notes:** Some doctors now show their patients what they are writing. Unfortunately, doctor's language can be difficult to understand. Latin and Greek are still in use although less so now. They also use abbreviations in your notes. So ask for explanations. *e.g. TATT – Tired all the time, DNA – Did not attend, FU2 – you insulted him!*



USER MANUAL UPDATES

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

ORGANISATIONS/AGENCIES

Irish Cancer Society

For further information about prevention, early detection or cancer in general, call our **Helpline:**

Freephone 1800 200 700

Weekdays 9am-5pm (Tues until 9pm)

e-mail: helpline@irishcancer.ie

for confidential advice from our health professionals.

Irish Cancer Society

43/45 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4

Telephone: (01) 231 0500

Website: www.cancer.ie

If you are a smoker and would like help quitting call the **National Smokers' Quitline** on **Callsave 1850 201 203**

MAC (Men Against Cancer)

A support group established with the support of the Irish Cancer Society. MAC provides information, advice and support to men who have had a recent diagnosis of prostate or testicular cancer.

Contact MAC at: Irish Cancer Society
43/45 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4
Freephone: 1800 200 700

Health Promotion Unit

Dept of Health and Children,
Hawkins House,
Hawkins Street, Dublin 2
Telephone: (01) 635 4000

WEBSITES

Irish Cancer Society
www.cancer.ie

Male Health Website UK
www.malehealth.co.uk

Men's Health Forum Ireland
www.mhfi.org

The Ulster Cancer Foundation
www.ulstercancer.co.uk

CancerBACUP
www.cancerbacup.org.uk

American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org

Health Promotion Unit
www.healthpromotion.ie

You can find more health information on your regional Health Service Executive site. Click on the Links section of the Health Promotion Unit website to find their websites.

Glossary of Common Terms

Chemotherapy: the use of drugs that kill cancer cells.

Erectile dysfunction: a condition where the penis can't become upright for sexual intercourse.

Polyps or adenomatous polyposis: growths, usually non-cancerous, that occur in the lining of the bowel.

Radiotherapy: the use of X-rays to destroy cancer cells.

Rectal examination: insertion of a glove-covered finger to check the lower end of the bowel and prostate.

Saturated fat: this fat comes mainly from animal fat. Unsaturated fat is a healthier option.

Scrotum: the pouch that contains the testicle.

Unsaturated fat: this fat comes mainly from vegetable fat and is better for one's health.

THIS WAY TO PASS YOUR NCT

All men need a regular NCT check-up. To pass yours, get on the right road:

- Watch your waistline
- Eat a healthy diet and drink less alcohol
- Get active

Being a healthy weight can lower your risk of cancer as well as improve your overall wellbeing.

For more information freephone

1800 200 700

weekdays 9am-5pm (Tuesday until 9pm)



irish cancer society

www.cancer.ie

The Irish Cancer Society has produced this booklet using guidance on plain English standards from the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

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The Irish Cancer Society MANual was highly commended by the British Medical Association (BMA) in the 2004 Patient Information Award (Printed Materials category). The MANual is a vital component of the Irish Cancer Society's Men's Cancer Action Week campaign, for which the Society also won the Award for Association of the Year at the 2004 Irish Healthcare Pharmaceutical Awards.