

# **Cancer: Look for Clues That Can Save Your Life**



What do cancer and lightning have in common? The answer: Most people think they come out of the blue--either they strike you down, or (if you're lucky) they don't. But that's where the similarity ends. Far more people die from cancer than get hit by lightning--it's the second leading cause of death in the United States (heart disease is first). Current estimates say that 30 percent of all Americans will develop some kind of cancer in their lifetimes, the most common forms being cancer of the skin, lungs, colon and rectum, breast, prostate, urinary tract, and uterus.

Of course, that means 70 percent of us won't get cancer. And luck is only part of the explanation. Cancer-free people may be doing something right--like not smoking, eating the right foods, drinking little or no alcohol, or protecting themselves from workplace chemicals. Cigarette smoking is estimated to be responsible for 83 percent of all lung cancers. Diet is considered a factor in 35 percent of all cancers. And other lifestyle factors that increase the risk of cancer include alcohol use, work-related exposure to dangerous chemicals, and exposure to radiation. (But whether or not you practice preventive measures against cancer, it's a good idea to be alert to early possible signs of the disease. If you can detect cancer early and get proper treatment, your chances for survival increase considerably.)

**Check with your doctor if you notice any of the following symptoms.**

- Any change in bladder or bowel habits
- A lump or thickening in the breast (or anywhere else)
- Unusual vaginal bleeding or rectal discharge or bleeding
- Persistent hoarseness or nagging cough
- A sore throat that won't go away.
- Noticeable change in a wart or mole
- Indigestion or difficulty swallowing

Source: A YEAR OF HEALTH HINTS - 365 Practical Ways to Feel Better and Live Longer by Don R. Powell. American Institute for Preventive Medicine. [www.healthylife.com](http://www.healthylife.com)  
Copies Compliments of the Employees Benefits Council State Wellness Program

**April is National Cancer Control Month**