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Wise Notes for Consumers

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Ways to Reduce Cancer Risks

The word cancer strikes fear in our lives. Fear because we all know of friends or family members who have dealt with the disease, and we are afraid that we, too, could be a victim. The American Institute for Cancer Research states that cancer cases could be reduced by about one-third if everyone ate a healthy diet, was physically active every day, and maintained a healthy weight. For the vast majority of Americans, taking control of one's life to achieve these behaviors may mean lifestyle changes. It may sound complicated, but it doesn't have to be as hard as you think.

The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas indicates that a good starting point is to make dietary changes by choosing a varied meal plan and reducing the serving sizes of food. When selecting meat and meat-alternate foods, select more often either plant-based foods and/or lean meat choices from the leg or loin cuts – about the size of a deck of cards. Select poultry with the skin removed. Fresh fish is another good choice. Select whole grain breads, cereals, pasta, and rice, all of which are good sources of fiber. Make an effort to eat a variety of dark green leafy and orange vegetables, and brightly colored fruits such as strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, citrus fruits, melons, etc. A diet high in fruits and vegetables has been linked to a reduced risk of cancers of the

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colon, esophagus, lung, and stomach.

Set a goal to be physically active every day in any way for 30 minutes or more. It can be as simple as walking, gardening, and doing household chores that require you to move and be active. Research shows that activity can keep our hormone levels healthy, which may play an important role in reducing our cancer risk.

For the past several weeks, over 160 participants have been making great efforts to raise their hormone levels by taking part in Walk Across Texas which is an eight week walking program made up of teams of eight persons or school classrooms. Thus far, teams have logged over 33,000 miles. The current program is drawing to a close, but that doesn't mean you still can't continue to use Walk Across Texas as a motivation tool to increase your physical activity. Simply, log on to <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/>; enter yourself or team, begin walking or other physical activity and report mileage on the web site weekly. The program is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

For more information on reducing your cancer risk, contact the Extension office at 940/627-3341.

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