



14th to 19th May 2012

### Cancer Prevention Week

Cancer Prevention Week promotes the message that up to one third of cancers are preventable through healthy lifestyle choices, including healthy eating, physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight, meaning that up to 66,000 deaths from cancer each year could be prevented in the UK alone.

Cancer Prevention Week is sponsored by the World Cancer Research Fund who published this information in a landmark report, the most comprehensive of its kind ever produced on the links between lifestyle and cancer risk.

There is no new research in this report: the expert panel of 21 world-renowned scientists condensed their recommendations from half a million studies over six years. However, from this they developed key Recommendations for Cancer Prevention that people can incorporate into their daily lives. The result, they say, constitutes the best medical advice anywhere in the world on how to reduce cancer risk.

"Cancer is not a fate, it is a matter of risk, and you can adjust those risks by how you behave. It is very important that people feel that they are in control of what they do," said Professor Martin Wiseman, author of the report. "If people are interested in reducing their cancer risk, then following these recommendations is the way to do it":

- \* Be as lean as possible within the normal range of body weight
- \* Be physically active as part of everyday life
- \* Limit consumption of energy-dense foods that promote weight gain and avoid sugary drinks
- \* Eat mostly foods of plant origin
- \* Limit intake of red meats and avoid processed meats
- \* Limit alcoholic drinks
- \* Limit consumption of salt
- \* Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone and not rely on supplements

The report is also the first to urge breastfeeding as a means to protect against cancer, arguing that it may reduce breast cancer in the mother and prevent obesity in the child - although this has not been proven.

Body fat is seen as a key factor in the development of cancer, estimating its significance to be much higher than previously thought. People with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of between 18.5 and 25 are deemed to be within a "healthy" weight range. Cancers of the colon and breast are some of the most common forms of the disease, and the report says the evidence is "convincing" that body fat plays a key role in the development of these tumours.

Cancer surgeon Mr Brinkmann adds that obesity is a known risk factor for gynaecological cancers such as ovarian and endometrial cancer, whilst obesity and smoking increases risk for cervical cancers.

Cancer specialist Professor Karol Sikora said: "The educational message for the public should be that there are healthy diets and unhealthy diets but we should keep everything in perspective and not suggest rigid avoidance." The report's authors stress this is list of recommendations not "commandments".

World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF UK) is part of a global network of charities committed to preventing cancer through research and education.