

Cancer Prevention Quiz

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Are the following statements True or False?

1. Diet causes cancer.
2. Vitamins prevent cancer.
3. Organic foods prevent cancer better than regular foods
4. The biggest risk of cancer is family history of cancer.
5. If your mother had breast cancer your chance of cancer is very high.
6. If 3 or more relatives had cancer you will get it, too.
7. A weak immune system causes cancer.
8. Stress makes your immune system weak.
9. The proper mental attitude will prevent cancer.
10. Religious practice can prevent cancer.
11. Science is on the verge of finding medicines to prevent cancer.
12. Some cancers can be prevented by medicines.
13. If you smoke you will always get cancer.
14. If you quit smoking you won't get cancer.
15. It's hopeless; everything causes cancer.
16. Getting the right medical tests can prevent cancer.
17. Mammograms hurt.
18. A colonoscopy is a pain in the ____.
19. A normal PSA guarantees there is no cancer.

Answers:

All of these statements are common beliefs. Only one is completely true. Only four are partially true.

The partially true ones are:

1. Hi fat diets are associated with certain cancers (especially breast, colon, prostate). Mainly, being

overweight is a risk for cancer. The converse, low fat or high veggie diets to prevent cancer, has not been proven.

- 16 Colonoscopy to remove polyps and mammogram to detect non-invasive cancer DCIS does prevent at least some cancers.
- 17 Sometimes mammograms are painful. Don't let that prevent you from having one. If necessary, take something (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc.) beforehand to make it more comfortable.
- 18 The colonoscopy isn't the problem. The laxative before the procedure tastes blechy and keeps you in the bathroom. The procedure is done under "conscious sedation" and the medicines keep you comfortable.

The one that is true is # 12. Breast cancer and prostate cancer can be prevented with currently available medicine. Cancer is not one but many different diseases and there is unlikely to be a single medicine that can prevent all cancers.

Cancer can occur in spite of an excellent diet, a "clean" family history, good stress control, spiritual enlightenment, etc. All we can really guarantee is that a life well lived is a life lived well. That may be enough.