

World Cancer Day points to prevention

February 3 2012

Health care organizations from around the globe will come together on Saturday, Feb. 4 to promote cancer prevention as part of this year's World Cancer Day.

Approximately one third of cancer deaths worldwide are tied to lifestyle and diet, making them largely preventable.

"Some of the things that we can do for prevention we've known about for a long time, but they're hard to do, like [tobacco cessation](#)," says Judy Garber, MD, MPH, director of the Center for [Cancer Genetics](#) and Prevention at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. "Stopping smoking would have a huge impact on cancer worldwide. And chewing tobacco, which is a lesser problem in the US, is a big problem in places like India, and for World Cancer Day, you have to think broadly about this."

World Cancer Day was started by the International Union Against Cancer, which includes the United Nations and [World Health Organization](#). The goal of the day is to raise cancer awareness around the world and help devise strategies to fight the disease. By highlighting prevention, organizers say people can pinpoint lifestyle choices that put them at greater risk for cancer, such as smoking, [excessive alcohol intake](#) and sun exposure.

"I think people need to try to live the healthiest lifestyle they can, from the earliest time they're willing to think about it," says Garber. "A good place to start is by controlling our weight. We can do this by exercising,

and exercising has its own benefits separate from weight loss."

Garber says it is also important that people know their family's health history. "If you know that your family is prone to one cancer or another look into it. Besides detection, cancer screenings could be used to find pre-cancers and even prevent cancer."

Provided by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

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