

Obesity behind surge in kidney cancers

April 24 2017



Credit: Cancer Research UK

An estimated 20,000 kidney cancer cases have been caused by obesity over the last decade in England, according to new figures from Cancer Research UK.

Kidney [cancer](#) rates have increased by 40 per cent over the last 10 years in the UK, and the rise is expected to continue.

Cancer Research UK projections show that by 2035 rates could increase by a further 26 per cent in the UK, making kidney one of the fastest growing cancer types.

Around a quarter (24 per cent) of kidney cancer cases are linked to carrying excess weight, and 24 per cent are linked to smoking.

Research shows that obesity is linked to 13 types of cancer, including kidney cancer. Scientists have yet to unravel exactly how being overweight or obese causes kidney cancer, but one explanation could be insulin resistance.

Insulin is a hormone which is important in the breakdown of carbohydrates and fats, and the kidneys help process this hormone in the body. Excess weight can lead to [insulin resistance](#), which can cause levels of insulin to rise, telling cells to divide more rapidly.

While not all kidney cancer cases are preventable, there are steps that people can take to cut their risk of developing the disease. Simple things like choosing sugar free drinks, eating meals at roughly the same time each day, and trying to hit 10,000 steps a day can all help you keep a [healthy weight](#).

Adam Freeman, a 46 year old lawyer and father of four from South London, was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 2013. He had surgery to remove a kidney and is now cancer free.

"When it comes to my lifestyle, I would say that the little devil on my one shoulder won over the angel on my other, so I ducked exercise and ate badly a bit too often.

"Now, since my diagnosis, I try to listen to the angel rather than the devil on my shoulder. I have tried to make things more habitual and rarely

skip exercise or make bad food or drink choices. I regularly cycle to work to try and keep fit, and I have also started doing yoga.

"Of course it's challenging to maintain a healthy lifestyle when you are juggling a career and family. I am only human! I'm a husband and father to our four children and my career can be demanding.

"But that's why things have to be a habit so it becomes part of your daily life. We talk much more as a family about healthy choices, particularly trying to make the children aware of how much sugar is in drinks and breakfast cereals. We try and reduce the amount of temptations in the house."

Every year there are around 11,900 cases of kidney cancer in the UK - 7,400 cases in men and 4,500 cases diagnosed in women. And every year about 4,300 people die from the disease.

Dr Julie Sharp, Cancer Research UK's head of health information, said: "It's concerning to see [kidney cancer](#) cases rising like this. Being overweight or obese is linked to 13 types of cancer, including [kidney](#) which is becoming more and more common.

"Similar to smoking, where damage to cells builds up over time and increases the risk of cancer, damage from carrying [excess weight](#) accumulates over a person's lifetime.

"Making small changes in eating, drinking and being physically active that you can stick with in the long term, is a good way to get to a healthy weight – and stay there."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

Citation: Obesity behind surge in kidney cancers (2017, April 24) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-04-obesity-surge-kidney-cancers.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.