WHAT CANCER RISK DO I HAVE AS A TRANS PERSON?

Trans individuals are generally at risk for cancers associated with their sex assigned at birth, as well as some cancers related to their gender confirmation/medical transition.

FOR EXAMPLE

Trans men are at risk for breast cancer (even if they have had a mastectomy), as well as cervical cancer. Breast cancer risk among trans women may be similar to or less than that among cisgender women. It is important that both trans men and trans women get screened.

DOES TRANSITIONING PUT ME AT ANY KIND OF INCREASED RISK?

Little is known about potential cancer risks associated with hormone therapy, so while you should generally feel safe transitioning under a doctor’s advice and care, you should also make sure you get all recommended cancer screenings.

WHAT ABOUT LUNG CANCER?

Transgender smoking rates have been reported as high as 83%, so there is likely a high rate of lung cancer in the community.

WHAT CAN I DO TO TAKE CARE OF MY HEALTH?

GET SCREENED

Trans individuals should receive screening for cancers associated with their sex assigned at birth, and may need screening for cancers related to their medical transition. Ask your healthcare provider which screening tests you need.

FIND A PROVIDER YOU TRUST

Your gender identity affects your risks for cancer in lots of ways. It’s critical that your doctor knows your gender identity, your sexual practices, and more about your life and potential risks. If you don’t feel that your doctor is receptive or knowledgeable about this, you can search for a new one as well as find cancer screening services, and get help if you face discrimination at healthcarebillofrights.org/gethelp.

REDUCE YOUR RISK

You can reduce your risk for cancer by doing the following:

» Stay smoke free, as cigarettes increase risks for many types of cancer.

» Keep a healthy diet and exercise, as being overweight can increase risk.

» Use preventive care, such as getting check-ups and cancer screenings.

» Get vaccinated. HPV and hepatitis B infection can increase cancer risk, but getting vaccinated can prevent infection. Find additional information at cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/prevention/vaccination.htm.

» Practice safer sex, as HPV is sexually transmitted and can cause cancer.

» Reduce sun exposure and avoid tanning bed use to prevent skin cancer.
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

TRANS INDIVIDUALS
AND CANCER

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Additional fact sheets and references for this document can be found at LgbtHealthlink.org/fact-sheets

WHY IS CANCER A PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR LGBT PEOPLE?

LGBT people, including trans individuals, have several RISK FACTORS that may put them at higher risk.

SMOKING is the most preventable cause of cancer and death. LGBT people smoke at a rate that is 50% higher than other adults. Smoking kills 30,000+ LGBT people every year.

ALCOHOL USE, POOR EATING HABITS, AND LACK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY increase your cancer risk, and LGBT people on average engage in higher-risk behavior than other individuals.

LOW USE OF PREVENTIVE CARE occurs because some LGBT people avoid care until they are sick. Getting regular check-ups and screenings is key to preventing cancer.