

Understanding cancer: A growing concern in Africa wellbeing



World Cancer Day is observed annually on 4 February to raise awareness and support for all types of cancer. **The theme for 2025-2027 is #UnitedByUnique**, which encourages individuals affected by cancer to share their stories. It also invites members of the public to raise awareness and support cancer-related initiatives within their communities.



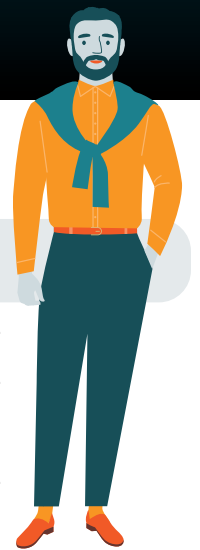
Cancer can develop in any part of the body, and certain types are more commonly found in males and females in Africa.

Females

- Breast cancer ●
- Cervical cancer ●
- Colorectal cancer ●
- Lung cancer ●
- Uterine cancer ●

Males

- Prostate cancer ●
- Liver cancer ●
- Colorectal cancer (including esophageal cancer) ●
- Lung cancer ●
- Karposi sarcoma (a cancer related to HIV/AIDS) ●



Risk factors

Risk factor type

Modifiable risk factors

Factors that **can** be changed or improved to lower the risk of disease

Examples

- Tobacco use
- Alcohol consumption
- A diet high in processed or unhealthy foods
- Being physically inactive

Risk factor type

Non-modifiable risk factors

Factors that **cannot** be changed or improved

Examples

- Age
- Family history and genetics
- Past exposure to cancer-causing substances such as radiation or chemicals

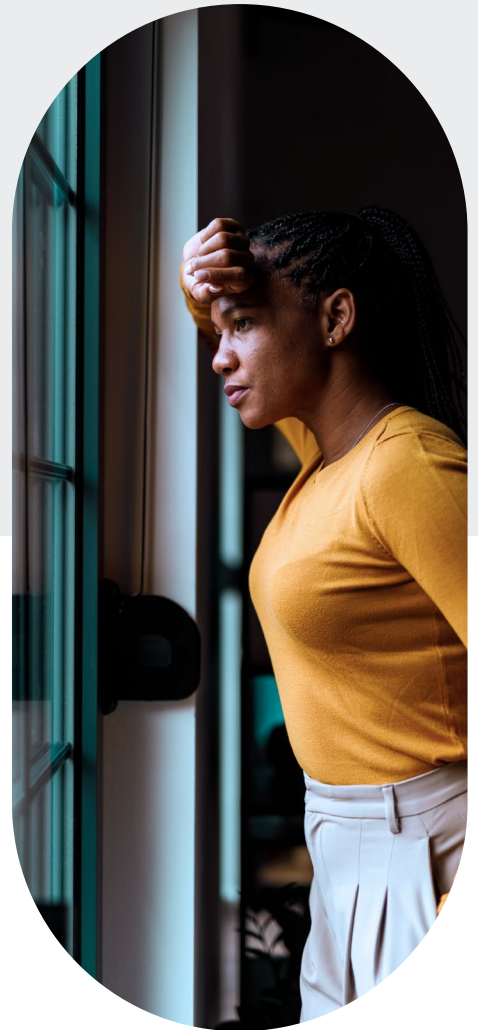
When the modifiable factors are improved, the overall risk of cancer can be lowered.

Screening

Health screening is important because diseases can be diagnosed early. By doing so, treatment and interventions can be started soon enough to prevent advanced disease and save lives.

Each cancer has specific tests and procedures that are used to screen at specific time intervals.

Pap smear, mammogram, prostate exam and PSA, and colonoscopy are some of the screening tools available. Speak to your doctor to determine which tests are appropriate for you and how often they should be performed.



Early signs

Cancer symptoms can vary from person to person depending on the type of cancer present. However, there are some common signs to watch for, including:

- Weight loss
- Body weakness
- Changes in bowel habits
- Abnormal bleeding
- Chronic tiredness
- The development and growth of a lump



Prioritise *early* detection of cancer

- Early detection of cancer saves lives
- Health screening should be a priority, even if you feel well
- Dedicate a month each year to your health screening
- Educate and encourage loved ones to screen too
- Make lifestyle changes to improve your wellbeing
- Support World Cancer Day by joining at [worldcancerday.org](https://www.worldcancerday.org)

Let's work together to **raise awareness and prioritise health.**