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# City of McAllen

# Benefits Department

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### Keep Halloween Candy Safe

Halloween is an exciting night when many children look forward to the fun of trick-or-treating. To ensure that your child's candy is safe, take a look at these helpful tips.

1. **Check the ingredients** if your child has any food allergies.
2. **Look for choking hazards**, specifically hard candy and chewing gum.
3. **Throw out unwrapped treats** or anything that looks like it may have been opened or tampered with.
4. **Do not keep homemade treats** unless you are certain that you know the person who made the treats and that they are safe.
5. **Inspect all fruits.** Throw out any that seem to be rotten or missing part of the peel.
6. **If you can't read it, don't eat it.** Avoid candy with wrappers printed in other languages.
7. **Wait to eat candy.** Instruct your child to never eat their Halloween candy while they are trick-or-treating.
8. One of the most important rules to follow is **if you are unsure about the candy, simply throw it away.**



## Cancer Basics: the facts you need to know

*Half of all men and one-third of all women in the U.S. will develop cancer during their lifetime. Although the sight of these numbers can be frightening, medical professionals believe the best way to beat this statistic is for people to familiarize themselves with cancer basics.*

There are hundreds of types of cancer, but one thing they have in common is the way they begin. Every body consist of DNA that is embedded in normal cells. Normal cells are what allow the body to grow at a regular speed. The life of a normal cell consist of growing, multiplying, and dying at a rate that is controllable for the body. Cancer cells develop when damage occurs to the DNA in normal cells. This damage causes normal cells to grow and divide at a very fast pace. Instead of dying, cancerous cells grow more cells with DNA damage and spread into other parts of the body, which can cause tumors. Most DNA damage

is the result of genetic mutations that people are born with, but other factors such as cigarette smoke have been known to cause DNA damage. The **symptoms** of cancer vary according to the type of cancer the person has. Some symptoms include fatigue, lump or thickening that can be felt under the skin, weight changes, skin changes, sores that won't heal, changes to existing moles, changes in bowel or bladder habit, persistent cough, difficulty swallowing, hoarseness, persistent indigestion or discomfort after eating, and unexplained muscle or joint pain. Although there is no known cure for cancer, there are many ways to help treat it. If the cancer is confined to one location, the most sought out **treatment** is surgery. If the cancer has already spread it could be

treated with either chemotherapy, radiation or a combination of both depending on the type of cancer. Some cancers might need to be treated with a mix of surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. Those who have fallen victims to cancer have found alternative treatments such as acupuncture, meditation, and yoga help relive their pain. Every type of cancer is different and treatment should be

specialized under the care of a doctor. There is no one cause of cancer, but there are some **preventative steps** that can help lead to a cancer-free life. Avoiding risk factors such as smoke, alcohol, tobacco, and excessive exposure to

sunlight can prevent cancerous cells from forming. These habits are not the only factors that can contribute to cancer. Age, family history, and the environment also play a big role in the development of cancer. Another preventative step is to get screened regularly. Going to the doctor on a regular basis and getting screened periodically can help detect early signs of cancer. Understanding the basics of cancer, what to look for, and getting screened regularly can make a big difference in how cancer is treated and how we can overcome this life threatening health risk. Most importantly, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, so visit [www.nationalbreastcancer.org](http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org) to find out how you can help in the fight against breast cancer!

October is Breast  
Cancer Awareness  
Month

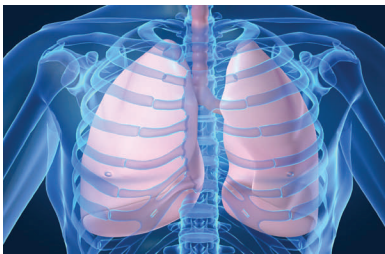


# Lung Cancer

*Lung Cancer is the leading cause of cancer related deaths in both men and women, yet this disease is considered one of the most preventable types of cancer. In this article you will find an overview about lung cancer and measures you can take to avoid this disease.*

There are two types of lung cancer, small cell and non-small cell. **Small cell lung cancer** is more common in men than women and is the deadliest form of lung cancer. Almost all cases of small cell lung cancer are found in heavy cigarette smokers and are rarely found in non-smokers. Because small cell lung cancer spreads extremely fast, people who develop this type of cancer rarely develop symptoms and have a survival rate of 2-4 months with treatment. The second type of lung cancer is Non-small cell. **Non-small cell lung cancer** is the most common type of lung cancer. This type of lung cancer can develop in any individual even if they are not smokers. Non-small cell lung cancer develops slowly and usually shows no warning signs. As you can see, cigarette smoke plays a major role in the development of lung cancer. For this reason cigarette smoke was named the leading cause of both types of lung cancer. People who smoke have the greatest risk of lung cancer, and the risk increases with the length of time and number of cigarettes smoked. Other factors such as asbestos, family history, and alcohol have been known to cause lung cancer. Unfortunately, the survival rates of people

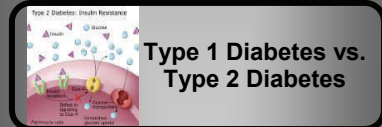
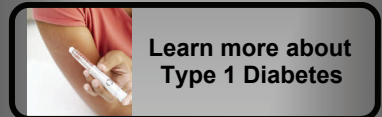
diagnosed with lung cancer are extremely low. People diagnosed at early stages have the greatest chances of survival because their cases are easier to treat. **Treatment** for both types of lung cancer vary depending on the type and at what stage the cancer is in. Cases of non-small cell lung cancer that has not spread is usually treated with surgery. If the cancer has already spread, chemotherapy and radiation are some of the more common forms of treatment. Small cell lung cancer spreads very fast, so surgery is usually not an option for treatment. Individuals who detect small cell lung cancer early are usually treated with chemotherapy and radiation. It is very difficult to detect lung cancer, but some warning signs could be a persistent cough, coughing up blood, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest pain, and loss of appetite. The number one **prevention** of lung cancer to is avoid contact with cigarette smoke. For those that smoke, it is best to stop as soon as possible. Quitting reduces the risk of lung cancer, even if you've been smoking for years. If you are not a smoker, avoiding secondhand smoke is the best way to prevent the development of lung cancer. A well balanced diet full of fruits and vegetables along with regular exercise can also help to reduce your risk of lung cancer. Steps such as these along with periodic health and cancer screenings is the number one way to combat lung cancer. It is crucial that we consider taking time out of our day to perform these preventive measures in order to live long and healthy lives.



Coming Soon >>>

In The Next Issue

## Chronic Disease II: DIABETES



Checkout our Intranet Page!  
[www.mymcallen.net](http://www.mymcallen.net)

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For more information visit:

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

[www.medlineplus.com](http://www.medlineplus.com)

## Provider Contact Information

Health Insurance  
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*As always, the City of McAllen Benefits Department is here to help you in your insurance inquiries as well. We can be reached at 956-681-1400 or by email at [benefits@mcallen.net](mailto:benefits@mcallen.net) for your convenience.*