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# 10 tips to keep disease at bay

**T**HE word “cancer” drives terror in the minds of many people. Understandably so, as there is no quick fix for it.

Genetics do play a vital role in cancer. But experts say that at least a third of all adult cancer cases are linked to one’s lifestyle.

**TOBACCO** — Lung cancer kills many people and in the United States, it kills more than any other cancer — 28 per cent of all cancer deaths, or about 160,000 people every year. Smoking is the main culprit.

Smoking is also associated with more than a dozen other cancers, including bladder, cervix, kidney and colon. It is said to be responsible for 30 per cent of all cancer deaths. Even if you are a non-smoker, you are as good as a smoker if you are exposed to second-hand smoke.

**OBESITY** — This has been blamed for heart problems but many are unaware that it causes cancer as

well — to the extent of 14 per cent of deaths involving the oesophagus, pancreas, gall bladder, breast and kidney organs.

**KEEP** mobile. Experts say: “It doesn’t matter that much what kind of exercise you do, or when — just do it”.

**WATCH** what you eat. Diets that are rich in plant-based foods tend to prevent cancer. For instance, tomatoes and watermelon contain lycopene, which is said to reduce the risk of prostate cancer.

**ALCOHOL** is like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. A little alcohol consumption, especially red wine, may be beneficial for the heart.

However, any alcohol consumption can raise your risk of cancer.

**DE-STRESS** yourself. Stress can elevate your cancer risk. Exercise and meditation help to strengthen the immune system and fight cancer.

**SCREENING** tests for various can-

cers like mammograms for breast cancer. Undergo prostate-specific antigen testing for prostate cancer. Pap smears and colonoscopies can detect precancerous changes so that a timely intervention can save lives.

**KEEP** yourself free of sexually transmitted diseases.

Among other risks, STDs — like human papillomavirus (HPV) and HIV-AIDS — are linked to a number of cancers.

**MEDICATION** — A study in 2010 found that daily use of low-dose aspirin can cut the risk of death due to certain cancers (especially lung, colorectal, and oesophageal) by almost a quarter.

But aspirin can cause stomach bleeding and irritation.

**EXAMINE** your family tree. Certain cancers seem to run in families.

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A diet rich in vegetables can prevent cancer.