

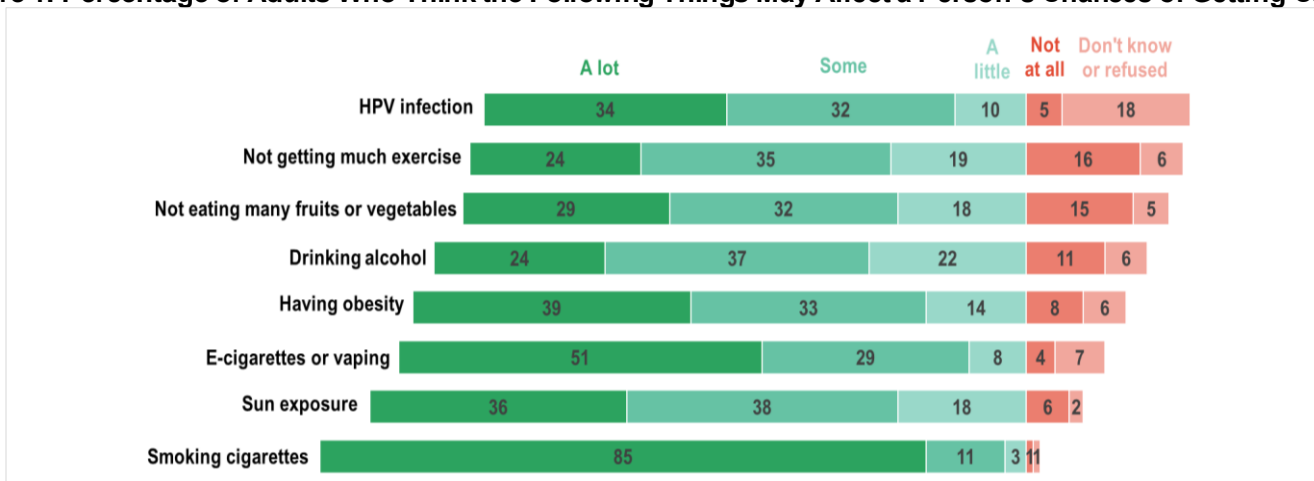
Addressing Gaps in New Yorkers' Cancer Prevention Knowledge



Each year, over 118,000 New Yorkers learn they have cancer.¹ Nearly half of all cancer cases could be prevented, with smoking, excess body weight, and drinking alcohol being the leading causes of cancer.² A recent survey found that some adult New Yorkers do not know certain lifestyle factors increase their risk of getting cancer. For example, about 1 in 4 New Yorkers (23%) are unaware human papillomavirus (HPV) infection increases a person's risk and 1 in 6 New Yorkers (17%) are unaware drinking alcohol increases a person's risk.

New Yorkers need to know they can lower their risk of getting cancer by making choices like avoiding tobacco, protecting their skin, limiting the amount of alcohol they drink, keeping a healthy weight, exercising, and getting the HPV vaccine.³ But knowing how to lower cancer risk is not enough. Policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) strategies are critical to changing laws, rules, and environments that support healthy choices and healthy communities.⁴ PSE strategies also play an important role in advancing health equity. Systemic racism influences the environments in which people live, work, and play, and those environments affect the lifestyle choices people have. Black New Yorkers have a greater risk of developing and dying from many cancers than New Yorkers who are not Black, including colorectal, cervical, and prostate cancers.¹ Communicating with the public about cancer prevention and promoting PSE strategies to community and government leaders are critical steps towards reducing the burden of cancer for all New Yorkers.

Figure 1. Percentage of Adults Who Think the Following Things May Affect a Person's Chances of Getting Cancer



Data Source: NYS Division of Chronic Disease Prevention Chronic Disease Public Opinion Poll 2022

Public Health Opportunity

A coordinated approach, including strategies outlined in the [NYS Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan](#), includes:

- Ensure that people are provided with the information and support they need to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- Invest in and educate about prevention-based programs that promote PSE strategies aimed at reducing exposure to cancer risk factors for all New Yorkers.
- Increase the availability of proven strategies to reduce the number of preventable cancers such as taxing cigarettes to reduce smoking and increasing vaccination rates to protect against cancer-causing HPV infections.
- Collaborate with partners outside of the health sector to address the root causes of health inequities, like structural racism, to promote equity in health outcomes like cancer.

For more information, please send an e-mail to BCDER@health.ny.gov with IFA #2023-01 in the subject line. To access other Information for Action reports, visit the NYSDOH public website: http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury_prevention/information_for_action/index.htm

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 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *Healthy Choices to Lower your Cancer Risk* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved December 6, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dpcp/prevention/other.htm>.
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