

Think About the Link: Campaign Overview

The Campaign

Think About the Link is a multi-year education campaign developed by the Prevent Cancer Foundation to increase awareness of the connection between certain viruses and cancers. Millions of Americans harbor viruses that cause cancer and hundreds of thousands worldwide suffer from the cancers they cause. Because many people are unaware a link exists between certain viruses and cancers, they do not take steps that can protect against many viruses, and ultimately, prevent cancer.

Think About the Link aims to increase awareness of the link between viruses and cancer, with the ultimate goal of preventing many types of cancer. The campaign is focused on three viruses linked to cancer: human papillomavirus (HPV), and hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses. Think About the Link aims to increase screening rates for the viruses, increase immunization rates for HPV and hepatitis B and raise awareness of and access to available treatment options for hepatitis C.

Prevent Cancer Foundation

Since 1985, the Prevent Cancer Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, has invested nearly \$142 million in support of cancer prevention research, education, outreach and advocacy nationwide and has played a pivotal role in developing a body of knowledge for prevention and early detection strategies. The Foundation is the only U.S. nonprofit organization solely devoted to cancer prevention and early detection. It has funded more than 450 scientists at more than 150 leading medical institutions across the country. The Foundation's public education programs have applied this scientific knowledge to inform the public about ways they can reduce their cancer risk.

Our Efforts

Think About the Link will work to achieve its goals of increasing awareness of the link between certain viruses and cancers, increasing immunization rates for HPV and hepatitis B, and increasing awareness of and access to treatment options for hepatitis C by:

- *Developing and sharing educational materials for primary care providers and patients on the viruses and their links to different cancers;*
- *Initiating and engaging in conversations with the public and health care providers on social media;*
- *Educating the media on the link between viruses and cancer; and*
- *Holding grassroots events in cities across the country to educate at-risk individuals within their local communities*

The Importance

Too few people understand the link between viruses, certain cancers and how to reduce the risk that these viruses will lead to cancer. For example, vaccinations for HPV and hepatitis B and screenings and treatment for hepatitis C are all critical prevention measures. In fact:¹

- More than half (53 percent) of adults are not aware HPV can lead to cancer if untreated.
- More than half (57 percent) of adults are not aware the HPV vaccine can significantly reduce the risk of certain cancers.
- Approximately 92 percent of adults believe more education is needed about the dangers of HPV.
- Sixty-seven percent of adults are not aware hepatitis B increases the risk of liver cancer.
- A majority (75 percent) of adults are not aware the hepatitis B vaccine can lower the risk of liver cancer.
- Seventy-three percent of adults are not aware that hepatitis C treatment can reduce the risk of liver cancer.
- Only 7 percent of adults indicated their physician has recommended one or more vaccines specifically to reduce cancer risk.

Your Role

There are many ways you can prevent cancers caused by viruses:

- Get vaccinated. Make sure you and your family receive the recommended HPV and hepatitis B vaccines.
- Get tested. If you are a woman, talk to your primary care provider about getting a Pap smear to screen for cervical cancer. If you are at high risk for hepatitis C infection, get screened for the virus.
- Protect yourself. Avoid engaging in behaviors that transmit HPV and/or lead to hepatitis B and C, such as having unprotected sex, abusing alcohol or using injectable recreational drugs or shared needles.
- Get Educated. Visit us at preventcancer.org to download resources; connect with us on Facebook; and follow us on Twitter to learn more about the link between viruses and cancer.
- Share your story. Help others understand the link and ways to prevent virally induced cancers by sharing your story.

References:

Statistics sourced from a survey conducted by the Prevent Cancer Foundation in partnership with Russell Research Firm.