



**Strang Cancer Prevention Institute**

Dedicated to Promoting Cure by Early Detection and Research to Prevent Cancer since 1933

# Prevention

National Cancer Prevention Month February 2022

## CANCER PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

Note to Readers: Fear of COVID exposure sharply reduced medical visits and preventive care in 2020. We have added information about cancer prevention during the pandemic.

**Preventing Cancers:** Other Cancer Awareness newsletters focus on specific cancers, but in National Cancer Prevention Month, we discuss interventions to reduce multiple cancers.

**Cancer Prevention During COVID Screening dropped — and recovered: Mammograms and colonoscopy dropped 95%** from March to April 2020 in commercially insured patients but **recovered** nearly (colonoscopy) or completely (mammograms) **by July**. Health systems responded quickly and successfully.<sup>1</sup> In the Massachusetts General Brigham System in Boston, rates of **mammogram, Pap, colonoscopy and PSA screening** dropped sharply early in the pandemic but **rebounded higher by September-December 2020** than in the prior two years.<sup>2</sup>

**Smoking during COVID increased for 28%, but dropped for 15%, and 25% tried to quit:** In a survey of smokers in 2020, 28% reported smoking more because of **stress, more time at home and boredom. Health worries and time around nonsmokers**, including children, 15% decreased smoking and 25% tried to quit. Most (67%) believed smoking didn't increase their risk of infection, but over half felt their **risk of COVID complications** if infected was **greater**.<sup>3</sup>

**SCREENING: Biological markers of cancer risk:** We choose patients for cancer screening mostly on age, gender and occasional risk factors like smoking. New science is changing that. **H. pylori infection** causes **stomach cancer**, but so may **autoimmune gastritis**. A Finnish study found that women with antibodies to **H. pylori** had **7-fold higher stomach cancer risk**, and **H. pylori-negative women with stomach cell antibodies** (anti-parietal cell antibodies) had more than **5-fold increased risk**.<sup>4</sup>

**HPV screening and vaccination have decreased cervical cancer 1% annually** between 2000 and 2017 but all **other HPV-caused cancers** (anal, rectal, vulvar and oropharyngeal) have **increased 5-fold. Over 80%** of HPV cancers in men are **oropharyngeal**.<sup>5</sup>

**PREVENTION: “Common soil” of cardiovascular and cancer risk: The Framingham Heart Study** found that the 10-year risk of cardiovascular disease correlated with cancer incidence. **Some shared risk factors were known: age, male sex and smoking**, but others, such as cardiac stress indicators **natriuretic peptides** were not. A **heart-healthy lifestyle** reduced cancer risk by 50%.<sup>6</sup>

**Cigarette smoking cancer burden varies with geography: Cigarette-associated deaths** (population attributable fraction) ranged from **9% to 36% in American cities**, with the highest rates in the South and Appalachia.<sup>7</sup>

Authors: James A. Talcott MD, SM, Senior Scientist, **Strang** Cancer Prevention Institute

Michael P. Osborne MD, MSurg, FRCS, FACS President **Strang** Cancer Prevention Institute

### REFERENCES

1. McBain RK, Cantor JH, Jena AB, Pera MF, Bravata DM, Whaley CM. Decline and rebound in routine cancer screening rates during the COVID-19 pandemic. *J Gen Intern Med* 2021;36:1829-31.
2. Labaki C, Bakouny Z, Schmidt A, Lipsitz SR, Rebbeck TR, Trinh QD, et al. Recovery of cancer screening tests and possible associated disparities after the first peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Cancer Cell* 2021;39:1042-4.
3. Yingst JM, Krebs NM, Bordner CR, Hobkirk AL, Allen SI, Foulds J. Tobacco Use Changes and Perceived Health Risks among Current Tobacco Users during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2021;18.
4. Song M, Camargo MC, Katki HA, Weinstein SJ, Mannisto S, Albanes D, et al. Association of antiparietal cell and anti-intrinsic factor antibodies with risk of gastric cancer. *JAMA Oncol* 2021.
5. Laio C-I, Caesar MAP, Chan C. HPV-associated cancers in the United States over the last 15 years: Has screening or vaccination made any difference? *J Clin Oncol* 2021;39.
6. Lau ES, Paniagua SM, Liu E, Jovani M, Li SX, Takvorian K, et al. Cardiovascular Risk Factors are Associated with Future Cancer. *JACC CardioOncol* 2021;3:48-58.
7. Islami F, Bandi P, Sahar L, Ma J, Drope J, Jemal A. Cancer deaths attributable to cigarette smoking in 152 U.S. metropolitan or micropolitan statistical areas, 2013-2017. *Cancer Causes Control* 2021;32:311-6.

# The Strang Cancer Prevention Cookbook

## Reduce your Risk for Cancer by Eating a Healthy Diet!

### Sautéed Spinach with Garlic

This cooking method can be applied to other leafy greens such as Swiss chard, escarole, broccoli rabe, and beet or turnip greens

- 1 1/4 pounds fresh spinach
- 1 tablespoon extra -virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled, lightly crushed, and quartered lengthwise
- Pinch of hot red pepper flakes (optional)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



Remove the stems from the spinach and tear any large leaves into bite –size pieces.

Rinse thoroughly and drain.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes if using, and cook over medium heat until the garlic is light gold; don't let the garlic get too brown or it will be bitter.

Remove the garlic and set aside.

Reserve the oil in the skillet and increase the heat to medium high.

Add the spinach and season with salt and pepper to taste. Sauté, turning the spinach with tongs to cook evenly. When the spinach is just wilted and tender, 2 to 3 minutes, remove the skillet from the heat. Using a slotted spoon or tongs, lift the spinach from the skillet leaving behind excess liquid. Transfer to individual plates or a platter. Top with garlic and serve

Spinach is exceptionally high in beta –carotene (110 percent of the DV for Vitamin A per serving of this recipe) as well as other carotenoids, folate (more than 80% of the DV), vitamin C ( more than 80% of the DV) and minerals such as calcium, iron, magnesium, and potassium. It is also high in protein when compared to other vegetables. A good source of fiber.

Calories 82, protein 5 g, carbs 7 g, fat 4g, cholesterol 0 mg, dietary fiber 4 g, saturated fat 1 g

MAJOR SOURCES OF POTENTIAL CANCER FIGHTERS.

Phytochemicals: allium compounds, terpenes (carotenoids).

Laura Pensiero, R.D., **Strang** Consultant  
Chef, Dietitian, Restaurateur, Author  
Owner Gigi Hudson Valley Trattoria & Catering, Rhinebeck, New York



February is National Cancer Prevention Month

 **Strang** Cancer Prevention Institute

575 Madison Avenue 10th Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
Tel: (212) 501-2111 [www.strang.org](http://www.strang.org)

Editor | Research Associate  
Merle K. Barash MA AEd, MA Psya

© Strang Cancer Prevention Institute