



# Cancer in Abu Dhabi

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**What is Cancer?** Cancer is a disease in which the body's cells become abnormal and divide without control. Cancer cells invade nearby tissues and can spread through the bloodstream and lymphatic system to other parts of the body. Most cancers are named for where they start. For example, lung cancer starts in the lung, and breast cancer starts in the breast. Lymphoma is cancer that starts in the lymphatic system. Leukemia is cancer that starts in white blood cells which are called leukocytes.

**What are the risk factors for cancer?** Research shows that certain risk factors increase the chance that a person will develop cancer. The most common risk factors for cancer are:

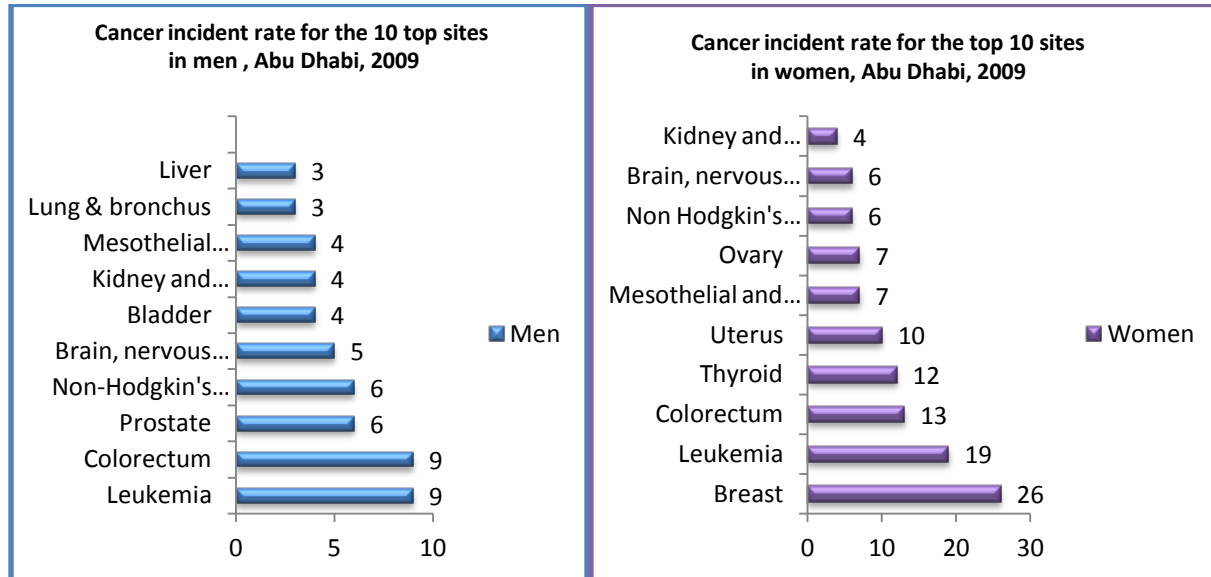
- Growing older
- Smoking or chewing tobacco
- Sunlight
- Radiation
- Certain chemicals
- Some viruses and bacteria
- Certain hormones
- Family history of cancer
- Drinking alcohol
- Poor diet
- Lack of physical activity

Many of these risk factors can be avoided. Others, such as family history or growing older, cannot be avoided. People can help protect themselves by reducing their known risk factors whenever possible.

There are some misconceptions about cancer. It is important to know that:

- Cancer is not caused by an injury, such as a bump or bruise.
- Cancer is not contagious. Although being infected with certain viruses or bacteria may increase the risk of some types of cancer, no one can "catch" cancer from another person.
- Having one or more risk factors does not mean that you will get cancer. Most people who have risk factors never develop cancer.

**What are the most common cancers in Abu Dhabi?** The top five cancers in males are 1. Leukemia, 2. Colorectal, 3. Prostate, 4. Non-Hodgkins and 5. Brain cancer. In females the top five cancers are 1. Breast, 2. Leukemia, 3. Colorectal, 4. Thyroid and 5. Uterus.



**How do cancer rates in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi compare with other countries?**

*Table 1. Age-standardized Cancer Incidence Rates per 100,000 by Sex; Global comparisons*

	Male	Female
US 2002-2006 <sup>1</sup>	556.5	414.8
UAE 1998 – 2005 <sup>2</sup>	68.2	67.8
UAE 2008 <sup>3</sup>	80.5	120.3
Abu Dhabi 2009 <sup>4</sup>	313.0	312.3

**What can be done to reduce the cancer rate and to help more people get screened for cancer?**

**Healthcare facilities can:**

- Participate in Health Authority Abu Dhabi cancer control and prevention initiatives and programs
- Develop cancer screening and prevention activities to encourage people to reduce their risk of developing cancer
- Develop systems to remind patients when they are due for cancer screening tests and make sure they receive test results promptly



### Healthcare professionals can:

- Provide comprehensive preventive medicine including age and gender appropriate history, examination, counseling, screening and risk factor reduction strategies
- Ensure timely care is provided for each patient, from screening through to treatment
- Adhere to quality guidelines to assure all cancer screening tests meet HAAD standards and guidelines
- If possible, offer patients multiple screening options

### Public can:

- Know your family history of cancer
- Talk to your health care provider about which screening tests you need and how often you should be screened
- Do not smoke tobacco in any form including cigarettes, cigars, shisha or medwakh
- Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke
- Eat a diverse range of healthy and nutritious foods
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day
- Avoid getting sunburnt
- Get vaccinated against human papilloma virus (women only)

### References:

1. National Cancer Institute: Accessed August 17,2011 <http://www.cancer.gov>
2. American Cancer Society: Accessed August 17, 2011 <http://www.cancer.org/>
3. Centers for diseases Control and prevention; Accessed August 17, 2011 <http://www.cdc.gov/>
4. World Health Organization; Accessed August 17, 2011 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs297/en/>