

## Dispelling four common cancer myths

Perci's Lead Cancer Nurse Specialist tells us what's true and what's myth, when it comes to cancer

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### Key takeaways:

- Many myths exist around cancer, which can make us change our behaviours or feel judged if we do get cancer
- Not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight through eating a healthy diet and keeping active, are the most effective ways to reduce your cancer risk
- There are myths about using plastic containers or antiperspirant and deodorants causing cancer. There are no strong studies for either claim.

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There are many myths around cancer: who gets it, what causes it and why cancer happens to some and not others. When discussing cancer risk reduction there are even more misconceptions, but we do know that [not smoking, followed by maintaining a healthy weight through eating a healthy diet and keeping active, are the most effective ways to reduce your risk](#). In this article, Perci's Lead Cancer Nurse Specialist, Rachel Rawson, challenges the most common cancer myths that appear on social media and in the press.

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### You are more likely to get cancer if someone in your family has been diagnosed

Approximately one in two of us will be diagnosed in our lifetime, so it's not unusual to have a close family member with cancer. Cancer is not usually inherited, but there are some types, mainly breast, ovarian, bowel and prostate cancer, that can be strongly influenced by genes and can run in families. If you are concerned about

cancer in your family, it can be helpful to look at your family tree and talk to your healthcare provider.

### **Deodorants or antiperspirants cause breast cancer**

[There are no strong studies](#) in people that link breast cancer risk and antiperspirant or deodorant use. Some people have also claimed that aluminium in antiperspirants can increase your risk, but again, there's no convincing evidence of a link between breast cancer and deodorants, antiperspirants or their ingredients.

### **Only people who smoke get lung cancer**

Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer. This means smokers and those who have smoked in the past have an increased risk of getting lung cancer. [However, an estimated 10–20% of lung cancer cases aren't caused by smoking. Long-term exposure to secondhand smoke, air pollution and chemicals, such as asbestos, have also been identified as some of the contributing factors to lung cancer in non-smokers.](#)

### **Psychological stress is a cause of cancer**

[Although stress does not directly increase cancer risk](#), we will all have stressful times in our life and it can be harder to keep healthy during these times. Stress can sometimes lead us to behave in unhealthy ways, such as [smoking](#), [overeating](#) or [drinking](#) more than usual – behaviours which do increase the risk of many cancers. If you're under stress, it's important to try to find other ways of coping, such as doing physical activity or finding a talking therapy that can support you.

