# **CANCER CAN BE PREVENTED**

# THE UNION FOR INTERNATIONAL CANCER CONTROL (UICC)



# **EMBARGOED UNTIL FEBRUARY 3, 2011, 6:00PM ET**

# About 340,000 of Common Cancer Cases Preventable in U.S. – Lifestyle Factors Key to Saving Lives

Latest cancer preventability data released to mark World Cancer Day

**GENEVA, Switzerland, 04 February 2011** – New estimates released today, on World Cancer Day, by the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) and World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF)<sup>1</sup> show that by eating a varied and healthy diet, undertaking regular physical activity, being at a healthy weight and limiting alcohol intake, about 340,000 cases of cancer in United States could be prevented each year. In fact, significant reductions in particularly common cancers could be achieved including breast (38 percent of cases), stomach (47 percent of cases) and colon (45 percent of cases).

The AICR/WCRF findings are further supported by the World Health Organization's (WHO) new *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health.*<sup>2</sup> This landmark report reinforces the AICR/WCRF conclusion that regular physical activity can prevent many diseases such as breast and colon cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes. The report provides concrete recommendations for levels of physical activity needed for health at three ages (5-17 years, 18-64 years, and over age 65);<sup>2</sup> these recommendations are especially helpful for low- and middle-income countries, where few national guidelines for physical inactivity exist.

"Physical activity is recommended for people of all ages as a means to reduce risks for certain types of cancers and other non-communicable diseases," says Dr. Tim Armstrong, from WHO's Department of Chronic Diseases and Health Promotion. "In order to improve their health and prevent several diseases, adults should do at least 150 minutes moderate physical activity throughout the week. This can be achieved by simply walking 30 minutes five times per week or by cycling to work daily".

There is also consistent evidence that other choices we make personally or collectively can reduce the risk of cancer including not using tobacco, avoiding excessive sun exposure, and protecting against cancer-causing infections. To help fight the global cancer epidemic, the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is urging Americans to take action and support the *World Cancer Declaration* - at www.worldcancerday.org/signdeclaration

Signing the Declaration will help UICC in its effort to motivate global leaders to set realistic and achievable directives for preventing cancer during the United Nations Summit for Non-Communicable Diseases, which will be held in September, 2011. This will be only the second UN General Assembly special session focused on health since 1947.

Dr Eduardo Cazap, President of UICC summarised, "Support World Cancer Day by signing the World Cancer Declaration and help us achieve the goal of one million supporters for a Cancer Free World. With individuals, governments and policy makers of the world working together, we have the ability to ease the global burden of cancer now and for future generations."

"The American Institute for Cancer Research is honored to be part of the effort to reduce cancer risk both in the United States and across the world. We urge Americans to make the simple lifestyle changes of eating healthy food, getting regular physical activity, and maintaining a healthy weight to reduce cancer risk," said AICR/WCRF expert panel member Tim Byers, MD, MPH of the Colorado School of Public Health. "We are making progress, but with hundreds of preventable cancer cases still being diagnosed every day in the United States, and thousands worldwide, it's imperative that we all take action now through both the personal and collective choices we make. I urge everyone to sign the World Cancer Declaration petition to move us forward in the fight against cancer everywhere."

To further support World Cancer Day, learn more about the facts of the global cancer epidemic by taking the LIVESTRONG 5 question World Cancer Day Quiz at <a href="http://quiz.livestrong.org">http://quiz.livestrong.org</a>

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### **Background information**

#### **About cancer**

Cancer is a leading cause of death around the world and its incidence continues to rise. Each year 12.7 million people discover they have cancer and 7.6 million people die from the disease. Evidence shows that 30-40% all cancers deaths can be prevented,<sup>3</sup> and one-third can be cured through early diagnosis and treatment.

As with most illnesses cancer is multifactorial which means that there is no single cause for any one type of cancer. However, certain largely controllable or avoidable lifestyle and environmental factors are also known to cause mutations that can cause cancer. For more information on health living initiatives please visit: www.worldcancerday.org/prevention

#### **About UICC**

The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is the leading international non-governmental organisation dedicated to the global prevention and control of cancer. UICC's mission is to eliminate cancer as a life-threatening disease for future generations. Founded in 1933, UICC unites 400 member organisations, specialised and engaged in cancer control, in more than 120 countries across the world. UICC is non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information please visit <a href="https://www.uicc.org">www.uicc.org</a> or join our join us on Facebook: <a href="https://www.uicc.org">www.facebook.com/pages/Cancer-Free-World/134386073255136</a>

#### **About the World Cancer Declaration**

The World Cancer Declaration is a tool to help bring the growing cancer crisis to the attention of government leaders and health policymakers in order to significantly reduce the global cancer burden by 2020. It represents a consensus between government officials, public health experts and cancer advocates from around the world who are committed to eliminate cancer as a life-threatening disease for future generations.

The Declaration outlines 11 targets to be achieved by 2020 including: significant drops in global tobacco consumption, obesity and alcohol intake, universal vaccination programmes for hepatitis B and human papilloma virus (HPV) to prevent liver and cervical cancer, universal availability of effective pain medication and dispelling myths and misconceptions about cancer. As the custodian of the Declaration, UICC encourages priority actions to achieve the Declaration's targets locally and nationally and promotes a comprehensive response across the globe. For more information please visit – www.uicc.org/declaration

#### About the UN high level meeting on non-communicable diseases

In May 2010, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), calling for a UN Summit on NCDs to be held on the 19-20 September 2011 in New York. The Summit will address the prevention and control of cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes, which together account for 60% (35 million) of global deaths. The largest burden - 80% (28 million) - occurs in low-and middle- income countries, making NCDs a major risk to global development and economic growth. For more information on the NCD summit visit: www.ncdalliance.org

#### For more information, please contact:

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#### References

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> WHO. Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health

WHO, 2007: 'The World Health Organization's Fight Against Cancer'. Available at: http://www.who.int/cancer/publicat/WHOCancerBrochure2007.FINALweb.pdf. Last accessed Jan 2011