Overweight and obesity increase cancer risk. A new report published today by World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) shows that overweight or obesity is a cause of at least 12 cancers**, five more than WCRF findings a decade ago. [**Liver, ovary, prostate (advanced), stomach (cardia), mouth and throat (mouth, pharynx and larynx) join bowel (colorectum), breast (post-menopause), gallbladder, kidney, oesophagus (oesophageal adenocarcinoma), pancreas and womb (endometrium).]

Other key findings include:

- Regularly drinking sugar-sweetened drinks increases your cancer risk, because it causes weight gain, overweight and obesity.
- Being physically active can help protect directly against three cancers [bowel (colon), breast (post-menopause) and womb (endometrium)], and also helps people maintain a healthy weight, reducing further their cancer risk.
- A healthy diet featuring wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and pulses and low in red and processed meat reduces your cancer risk.
- Drinking alcohol is strongly linked to an increased risk of six cancers**. This is one more (stomach cancer) than WCRF findings a decade ago. [**Bowel (colorectum), breast (both pre- and post-menopause), liver, mouth and throat (pharynx and larynx), oesophagus (squamous cell carcinoma) and stomach.]

Lifestyles featuring little exercise and lots of fast and processed food are fuelling overweight and obesity, resulting in dramatic increases in cancer rates worldwide, according to the new report from WCRF, leading authority on the links between diet, weight, physical activity and cancer prevention and survival. Around one in six deaths annually worldwide are due to cancer. As more countries adopt ‘Western’ lifestyles, the number of new cases of cancer is expected to rise by 58% to 24 million globally by 2035.

The new report – *Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: a Global Perspective* – is the result of an ongoing review of decades of evidence by world-renowned, independent experts from across the globe. It provides strengthened evidence for a comprehensive package of behaviours that, when followed together, represent the most reliable blueprint available for living healthily to reduce cancer risk: WCRF announces today its ten, updated Cancer Prevention Recommendations.

With more than 3.7 million new cases and 1.9 million deaths each year, cancer represents the second most important cause of death and morbidity in Europe. On a
global scale, cancer accounted for 8.2 million deaths (around 13% of the total) in 2012. Europe comprises only one eighth of the total world population but has around one quarter of the global total of cancer cases with some 3.7 million new patients per year. (See ‘Notes to editors’ for reference.) Further, as WCRF’s latest report indicates, the quality of diet and levels of activity of most people living in wealthy societies do not encourage healthy ageing, so further impact on cancer rates is anticipated as populations age worldwide.

Dr Giota Mitrou, WCRF’s Director of Research Funding and External Relations, today (24 May) chairs a session presenting the findings of Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: a Global Perspective at ECO 2018, the 25th European Congress on Obesity, in Vienna. NB: there will be an embargoed press conference at ECO 2018 on 23 May.

Dr Mitrou said: “Our research shows it’s unlikely that specific foods or nutrients are important single factors in causing or protecting against cancer. Rather, different patterns of diet and physical activity throughout life combine to make you more or less susceptible to cancer. Our Cancer Prevention Recommendations work together as a blueprint to beat cancer that people can trust, because they are based on evidence that has now proved consistent for decades.”

- WCRF’s latest Cancer Prevention Recommendations are listed in full below, under ‘Notes to editors’. They can also be found online at: www.wcrf-uk.org/10ways
  - They now include separate recommendations to limit consumption of fast/processed foods, and sugar-sweetened drinks.

- An executive summary of Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: a Global Perspective is available upon request.
  - Full copies of the report will be freely available online from 0001 on 24 May (UK time) at dietandcancertreport.org

WCRF is committed to giving people the most up-to-date and authoritative information about cancer prevention and survival, enabling them to make healthy lifestyle choices in their daily lives to reduce their cancer risk. So WCRF is also today launching a brand new, online Cancer Health Check tool. By answering some simple questions about their lifestyle, people can see which areas they are doing well in, and which areas they could make changes in, to reduce their cancer risk.

- WCRF’s online Cancer Health Check can be found at: [web link to come].

However, cancer prevention depends not only on individual choices but also on governments creating an environment that encourages lifelong healthy eating and a physically active lifestyle. WCRF today calls on governments to prioritise cancer prevention through the development and implementation of effective policies to address the rising burden of cancer in the UK and worldwide. WCRF representatives are currently at the 71st World Health Assembly in Geneva (1-26 May), reinforcing this message.
Meanwhile, leading researchers, scientists, policymakers and other opinion-formers in the field will gather at the Royal Society in central London on 24 May to hear key findings from the new WCRF report, and its latest Cancer Prevention Recommendations. They will debate their implications for future cancer research directions, how to translate them into public health and policy action, and the implications for cancer survivorship.

Background to the new report: WCRF’s Continuous Update Project (CUP) brings together an independent panel of scientists to carry out regular, systematic analyses of research into the links between diet, weight, physical activity and cancer prevention and survival, resulting in landmark WCRF cancer prevention reports in 1997 and 2007, and now the publication of *Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: a Global Perspective*. For this latest report, the panel reviewed studies on 17 cancers, comprising 51 million people of whom 3.5 million were diagnosed with cancer. Studies evaluating adherence to WCRF’s Cancer Prevention Recommendations from 2007 have confirmed the positive impact of following them (please see below for references).

The World Cancer Research Fund network comprises American Institute for Cancer Research, Wereld Kanker Onderzoek Fonds (Netherlands), World Cancer Research Fund Hong Kong, World Cancer Research Fund UK and World Cancer Research Fund International – the latter has held official relations status with the World Health Organization since 2016.

For more information, please contact the World Cancer Research Fund Press Office by emailing pr@wcrf.org or calling +44 (0) 20 7343 4200 (out of hours: +44 (0) 7879 483022).

Notes to editors

About World Cancer Research Fund:
World Cancer Research Fund is a leading authority on the links between cancer prevention and survival and diet, weight and physical activity. By funding and supporting research, developing policy guidance and providing health information, we ensure that people can make informed lifestyle choices to reduce their risk of developing a preventable cancer. Our scientific research ensures that we will continue to have the latest and most authoritative information at our fingertips, all underpinned by independent expert advice.

For more information visit www.wcrf-uk.org, follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/wcrf_uk or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wcrfuk.

Cancer Prevention Recommendations:

**Be a healthy weight**
Keep your weight within the healthy range and avoid weight gain in adult life

**Be physically active**
Be physically active as part of everyday life – walk more and sit less

**Eat a diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans**

Make wholegrains, vegetables, fruit, and pulses (legumes) such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet

**Limit consumption of ‘fast foods’ and other processed foods high in fat, starches or sugars**

Limiting these foods helps control calorie intake and maintain a healthy weight

**Limit consumption of red and processed meat**

Eat no more than moderate amounts of red meat, such as beef, pork and lamb. Eat little, if any, processed meat

**Limit consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks**

Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks

**Limit alcohol consumption**

For cancer prevention, it’s best not to drink alcohol

**Do not use supplements for cancer prevention**

Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone**.

**For mothers: breastfeed your baby, if you can**

Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby

**After a cancer diagnosis: follow our recommendations, if you can**

Check with your health professional what is right for you

- Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk.
- Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.

WCRF’s Cancer Prevention Recommendations are also available online at: [www.wcrf-uk.org/10ways](http://www.wcrf-uk.org/10ways)

**NB**¹: there are some findings in *Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: a Global Perspective* that were not included in WCRF’s Cancer Prevention Recommendations even though the evidence for them is strong, however, locally
applicable actions are recommended. Among these are some food and drinks that are only consumed in specific parts of the world: namely maté (a hot tea drunk scalding hot mainly in South America), foods preserved by Asian-style salting, and Cantonese-style salted fish.

**NB2: Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: a Global Perspective** recognises that in some situations – for example, in preparation for pregnancy or when diet is inadequate for some reason – supplements may be advisable. But for cancer prevention, we are confident that for most people eating the right food and drink is more likely to protect against cancer than taking dietary supplements.

**European cancer statistics reference:**

**References to key studies related to the positive impact of following the WCRF Cancer Prevention Recommendations (2007):**

