

Public urged to lead a healthy lifestyle to tie in with World Cancer Day

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 4) urged members of the public to support World Cancer Day 2020 through leading a healthy lifestyle to prevent and control cancer.

World Cancer Day has been designated for February 4 each year by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) since 2000 to increase community understanding of threats posed by cancer and to unite the global population in cancer prevention.

The theme "I am and I will", being adopted for three consecutive years from 2019, means everyone has the power to reduce the impact of cancer for oneself, for their loved ones and for the world.

A spokesman for the DH said that individuals can adopt a healthy lifestyle, such as being physically active, refraining from smoking and drinking alcohol, and consuming more vegetables and fruits as well as eating less red and processed meat, in order to prevent and reduce the risk of cancer.

Cancer is the leading cause of death locally. In 2017, more than 33 000 new cancer cases were reported in Hong Kong, showing a rise of 1 600 more cases from the figure in 2016. The five most common types of cancers were colorectal cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer and liver cancer.

"An unhealthy lifestyle is the leading cause of cancer. Studies have shown that about 40 per cent of cancer cases are preventable by adopting a healthy lifestyle," the spokesman said.

Tobacco, alcohol, physical inactivity, an unhealthy diet and being overweight or obese are the major risk factors of cancer. Among them, tobacco is the single most important risk factor for cancer, as it leads to 90 per cent of lung cancers. Like tobacco, alcoholic beverages are also classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO also estimated that about 21 to 25 per cent of breast cancer and colorectal cancer cases are mainly attributed to physical inactivity. An unhealthy diet and being overweight or obese can also increase the risk of a number of cancers.

The Government promulgated the first [Hong Kong Cancer Strategy](#) in last July, with a view to reducing the cancer burden of the local population and improving the quality of life and survivorship of cancer patients through

setting work priorities and directions.

The Hong Kong Cancer Strategy is in line with "[Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong](#)", which was published in May 2018, focusing on the four shared behavioural risk factors so as to reduce the burden caused by non-communicable diseases including cancer by 2025.

The DH has fully implemented the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme (CRCSP) (www.colonscreen.gov.hk) on January 1 and further extended its coverage to Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75, i.e. those born in the years 1944 to 1970. The CRCSP heavily subsidises asymptomatic Hong Kong residents to undergo screening tests for colorectal cancer with no quota for participants.

Moreover, the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme under the Centre for Health Protection of the DH, from the 2019/20 school year, has started to provide eligible female primary school students with human papillomavirus vaccine to prevent cervical cancer.

More information on World Cancer Day is available on the UICC's website (www.uicc.org/what-we-do/convening/world-cancer-day).