

OBESITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN UK-WIDE

Monday 26th February – Sunday 25th March



CANCER
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Cancer Research UK will launch a national campaign in February 2018 aimed at raising awareness of the link between obesity and cancer.

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING THIS CAMPAIGN?

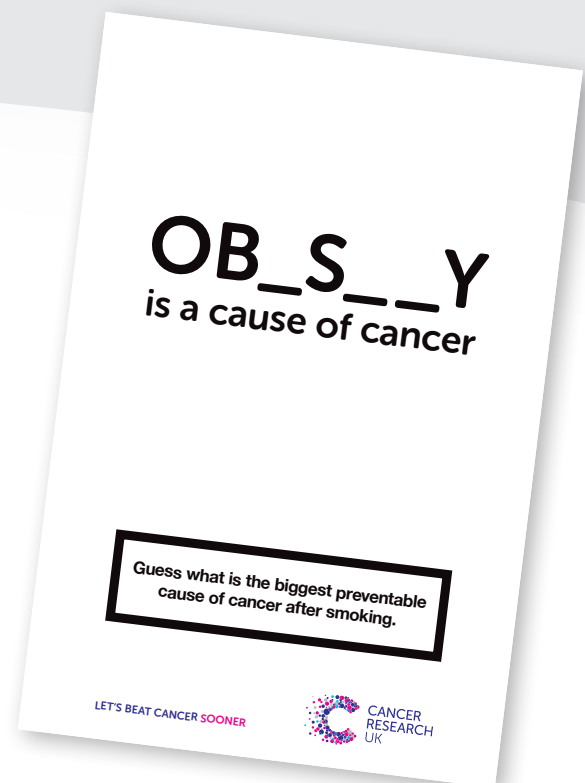
Cancer Research UK is committed to beating cancer. Every year, 4 in 10 cancer cases in the UK could be prevented. Overweight and obesity is the second biggest preventable cause of cancer in the UK after smoking. It is estimated that 5%¹ of cancer cases are linked to excess bodyweight in the UK per year yet only 15%² of people are aware of this link.

Feedback during testing³ of the campaign advertising highlighted that people felt it was Cancer Research UK's responsibility to communicate this important message and it was something the public should be made more aware of.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THIS CAMPAIGN?

We want to raise the awareness of the link between obesity and cancer and keep the issue top of mind publicly and politically. We understand that making healthy choices in the world we live in is not easy so one of our main goals is to lobby the government and food industry to make changes so it's easier for everyone to live a healthy life. Research has shown that raising public awareness of an issue creates a favourable environment for policy change, which in turn can lead to effective public health policy and behaviour change⁴. For some people increased awareness may also trigger them to make healthier choices, however changing behaviour is not the primary aim of this campaign.

We tested the campaign by running a regional pilot in the West Midlands in October 2016 and saw that it works, successfully increasing awareness of the link by 22% points⁵.



HOW DOES OBESITY CAUSE CANCER?

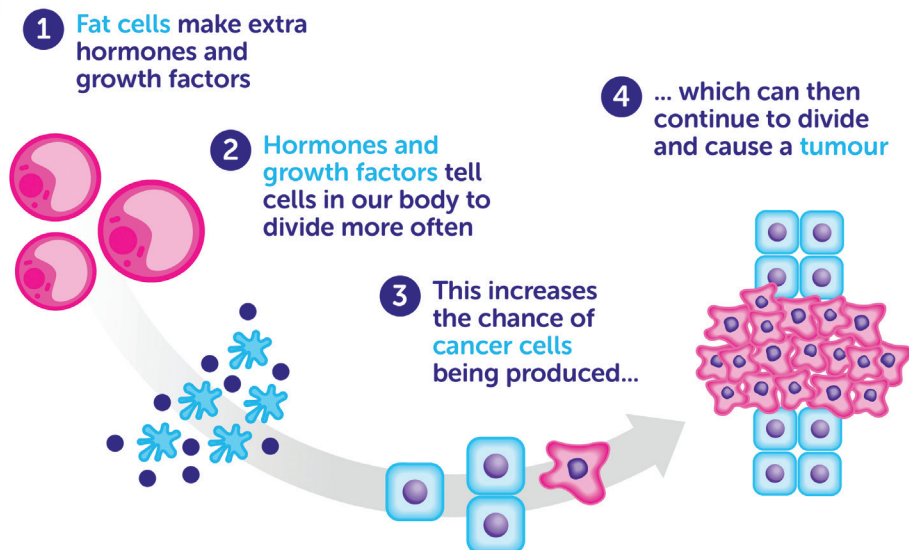
Scientists around the world and organisations such as the World Health Organization understand 3 key ways in which excess weight can lead to cancer. Extra body fat can cause greater levels of growth hormones, sex hormones and inflammation in the body. All these factors can lead to greater cell division, increasing the chance of cancer cells being produced.

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WHAT ACTIVITIES WILL BE TAKING PLACE AND WHEN?

The campaign launches on Monday 26th February and runs through until Sunday 25th March. It will include outdoor posters at bus stops and billboards (first 2 weeks only), radio adverts, online advertising, Facebook and twitter adverts and lots of press and PR coverage. The campaign is UK wide so you'll see it wherever you are in the country.

As part of the activity we are going to be doing a PR stunt and putting chips in cigarette packets to make people aware that, like smoking, excess weight is a cause of cancer. We'll be going to a UK high street with these to see how the public react to this new information and will be filming the experience. We are also planning a Facebook live panel discussion where the public can ask experts, including a GP, questions raised by the campaign.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CAMPAIGN?

Weight is a very personal and complex issue, so talking about weight can make people feel lots of different things. The aim of the campaign is to give people evidenced based facts to help them understand the impact of excess weight on cancer risk. Some people could interpret the campaign as "fat shaming" but we have information ready to help you explain the campaign and answer questions about concerns like this.

WHAT IS CANCER RESEARCH UK DOING TO HELP TACKLE OBESITY?

We provide information, tips and advice, to help people keep a healthy weight, eat a balanced diet and be more physically active to stack the odds against cancer.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Visit [Cancer Research UK's obesity and cancer hub](#) to find the facts about how being overweight causes cancer, the evidence and advice on how to keep a healthy weight.
- Visit [Cancer Research UK's policy on obesity and diet](#) webpage to find out more about how we are campaigning to tackle childhood obesity and how you can show your support.
- Visit our [publications site](#) to download campaign materials including posters and leaflets.
- Please contact hollie.webb@cancer.org.uk for further information on the campaign or to request the Frequently Asked Questions document.

We fund research to help improve the evidence base about obesity and cancer for policymakers, as well as looking at how we can use behavioural interventions to help people live more healthily. We lobby the government to introduce policy measures to address the issue. We also go out and speak to the public in various ways through community engagement.

- 1 Parkin, Boyd, Walker, BJC, 2011
- 2 CRUK Cancer Awareness Measure, 2017
- 3 CRUK qualitative research study, Kindling, 2016
- 4 P Buykx et al, International Journal of Drug Policy, 2015
- 5 CRUK research study, Morar, 2016

Cancer Research UK is a Registered Charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666) and the Isle of Man (1103).