

# Why our work is needed

In the UK, cancer accounts for one in four of all deaths. Almost everyone is affected by cancer at some point in their lives. The human suffering caused by cancer explains why our work is so important.

## About cancer

Cancer is a complex disease. The term cancer actually describes more than 200 diseases that all involve the uncontrolled, abnormal growth of cells. Each type of cancer has different causes, symptoms and treatments. The most common types of cancer in the UK are breast, lung, bowel and prostate. Together, these make up just over half of all new cancer cases.

## How cancer affects us

There are more than 285,000 people diagnosed with cancer each year in the UK.

Although different cancers have different risk factors, the overall risk of developing cancer rises as we get older. Because our population is ageing, more people are getting cancer.

## What we can do about it

Through our research, we are finding out more about what causes cancer and how it can be prevented. Our researchers are leading some of the largest studies ever undertaken in this field with partners from around the world.

Developing cancer depends on lots of factors, but we know that some things increase our risk. Half of all cancers could be prevented by changes to our lifestyle. Smoking, being overweight, an unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, over-exposure to the sun and too much alcohol can all increase a person's chance of developing cancer. The earlier cancer is diagnosed, the more successful treatment is likely to be, so attending screening when invited and going straight to the doctor if symptoms arise are also crucial.



**1 in 3**  
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