

## LGBT WELLNESS

Wellness is about being physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) people have unique wellness needs because of the health disparities they face.

## WHO WE ARE

CenterLink's LGBT HealthLink program, one of eight CDC-funded disparity networks, is a community of experts and professionals working to advance LGBT health outcomes by reducing tobacco and cancer related health disparities within LGBT communities. LGBT HealthLink advances this goal primarily by collaborating with LGBT community centers nationwide and by linking people with evidence-based best and promising practices.



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Additional fact sheets and references for this document can be found at [LgbtHealthlink.org/fact-sheets](http://LgbtHealthlink.org/fact-sheets).

## LGBT Wellness



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# 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE YOUR WELLNESS AND WHY

## RESEARCH INSURANCE OPTIONS

LGBT people, particularly those of color, are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual people, hindering access to care. Visit [out2enroll.org](http://out2enroll.org) to learn how to get insured.

## USE PREVENTIVE CARE

LGBT people under-use cancer preventive services such as HPV vaccination, as well as breast and cervical cancer screening. Most preventive care is covered by many insurance plans.

## STAY SMOKE-FREE

Cigarette smoking kills 30,000+ LGBT people a year, and causes many respiratory and health problems throughout the lifespan. Three in ten LGBT people smoke. You can find a quitline and get help at [smokefree.gov/lgbt-and-smoking](http://smokefree.gov/lgbt-and-smoking).

## SLAP ON SOME SUNSCREEN

Sexual minority men have at least 56% higher odds than heterosexual men of having skin cancer, possibly as a result of tanning indoors and outside as a way to cope with negative body images.

## ADOPT A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE

Lesbians are twice as likely as are heterosexual women to be overweight. Risk also may be increased in bisexual women. Maintaining a healthy weight and regular physical activity can prevent chronic health conditions, including some types of cancer.



## STEER CLEAR OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

LGBT people have higher levels of alcohol and drug use, which may be linked to experiencing discrimination. LGBT youth are 25% more likely to drink, 50% more likely to use marijuana, twice as likely to use ecstasy and cocaine, and four times as likely to use heroin and meth. To find an LGBT friendly provider go to GLMA at <https://goo.gl/2VZvVg>. To find a treatment center near you go to SAMHSA at <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>.

## SEEK MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

LGBT youth have elevated rates of suicide and frequently face bullying, sexual abuse, and other challenges that can carry through to adulthood. Learn more about mental health disparities and find resources at [Nami.org/Find-Support/LGBTQ](http://Nami.org/Find-Support/LGBTQ).

## KEEP A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

Transgender youth are twice as likely as cisgender youth to attempt suicide if they had a desire to change their weight. Queer youth may have increased risks of eating disorders because of unique body image issues some face. Love your body and talk to a healthcare provider if you have concerns.

## PRACTICE SAFER SEX

Queer men and transgender women have increased risks of HIV infection. Learn safer sex practices at <http://tiny.cc/saferlgbt> and <http://tiny.cc/safertrans>.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

You should feel safe talking to your healthcare providers about your health and wellness. If you're not comfortable with your current healthcare providers, you should find a new one if possible. Learn about your rights, privacy, and options at [healthcarebillofrights.org](http://healthcarebillofrights.org).

