

Overloaded, skeptical, and scared: Public perception of cancer

Cancer prevention, detection, and treatment have never been better. Simply put, we are closer to winning the war on cancer. Yet, surveys reveal that many Americans feel overloaded, skeptical, and scared. Worst of all, these negative perceptions about cancer research seem to impact behavior as citizens avoid or reject beneficial courses of action. Communication researchers are working to change these perceptions. A key first step may be recognizing the disconnect between public perception and research progress.

Public Perception

Research Progress

Cancer prevention overload

72%

BELIEVE THERE ARE
TOO MANY
RECOMMENDATIONS
TO FOLLOW

Cancer prevention recommendations

NUMBER OF CANCER
PREVENTION
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR EVERYONE.*

5

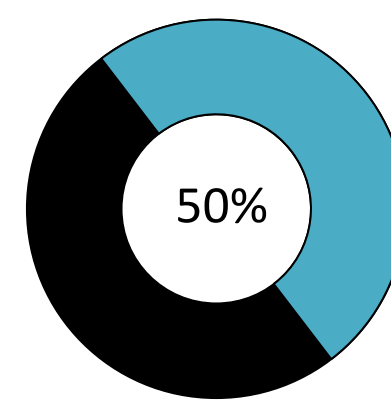
*AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Skepticism about prevention

1 IN 5
BELIEVE


THERE'S NOT MUCH
YOU CAN DO
TO LOWER YOUR RISK

Things you can do to lower your risk



50% of **CANCER** COULD
BE PREVENTED IF
PEOPLE DID 5 THINGS:

- DON'T SMOKE
- EXERCISE MORE
- KEEP A HEALTHY WEIGHT
- GET SCREENED
- BE SUN SAFE

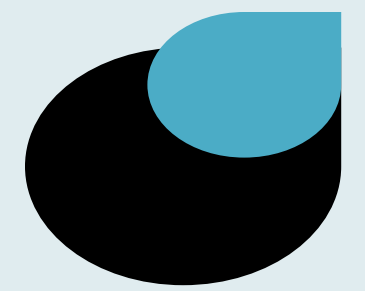
Feeling that everything is a carcinogen

62%

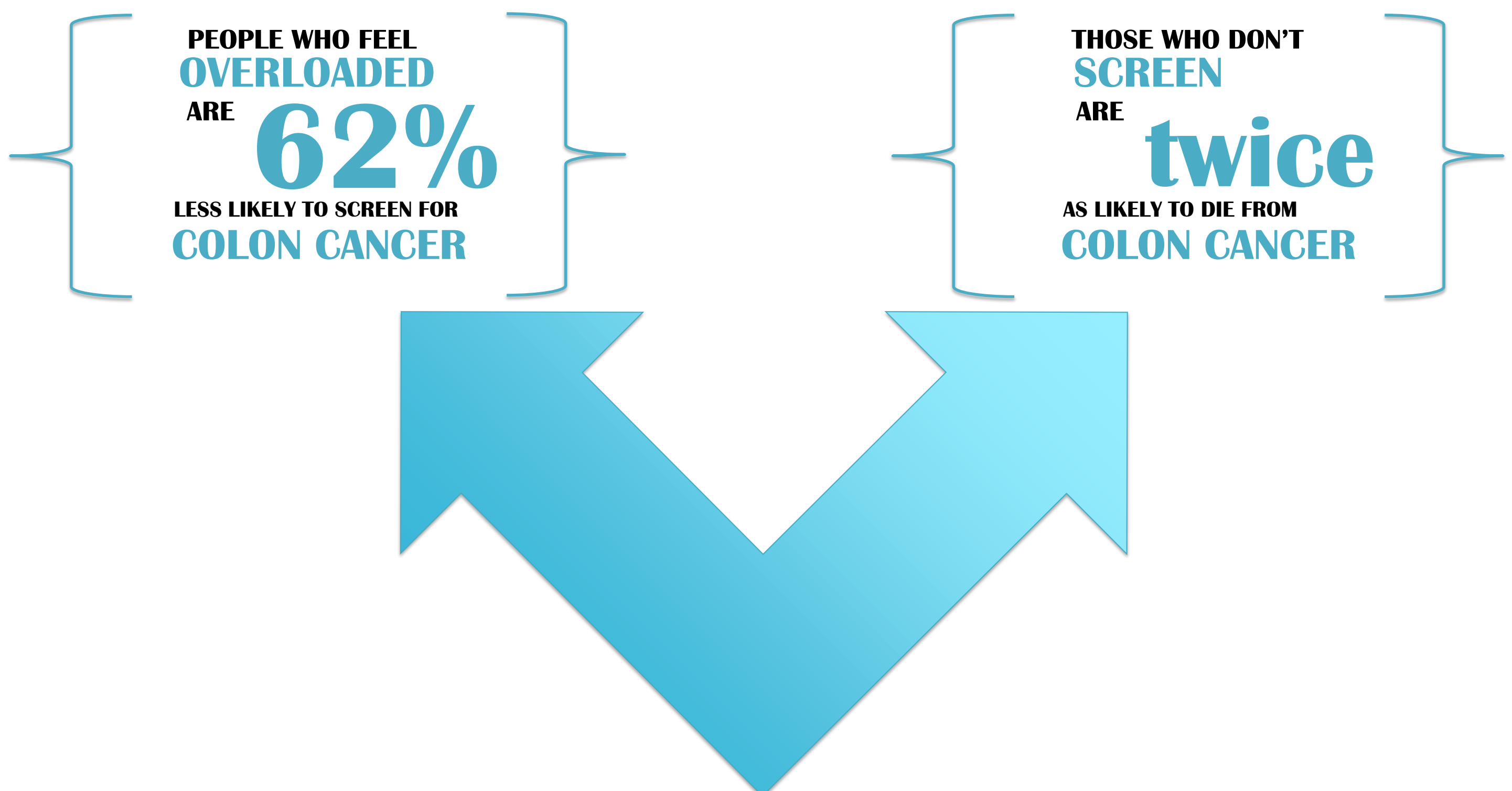
AGREE THAT
EVERYTHING
SEEMS TO CAUSE
CANCER

Known or probable carcinogens

THERE ARE MORE THAN 9 MILLION
SUBSTANCES IN THE
WORLD, BUT ONLY
240 CAUSE CANCER



THESE FALSE PERCEPTIONS HURT US.
WE NEED TO CHANGE OUR THINKING.



WE CAN TAKE ACTION.
WE CAN WIN THE WAR ON CANCER.