



Cancer Prevention and Diet

What you need to know about cancer and diet

Not all health problems are avoidable, but you have more control than you may think. Research shows that a large percentage of cancer-related deaths are directly linked to lifestyle choices such as smoking, drinking, a lack of exercise, and an unhealthy diet. Avoiding cigarettes, minimizing alcohol, and getting regular exercise are great tools for an anti-cancer lifestyle. But you also need to look at your eating habits. Without knowing it, you may be eating many foods that fuel cancer, while neglecting the powerful foods that can protect you.

Tip #1: Focus on plant-based foods. Why? Plant-based foods are cancer-fighting powerhouses.

Simple tips for getting more plant-based foods in your diet

- **Breakfast:** Add fruit and a few seeds or nuts to your whole grain breakfast cereal.
- **Lunch:** Eat a big salad filled with your favorite beans and peas or other combo of veggies. Always order lettuce and tomato plus all other available vegetables on your sandwiches. Order whole grain bread for your sandwiches. Have a side of veggies like cut up carrots or a piece of fruit.
- **Snacks:** fresh fruit and vegetables. Grab an apple or banana on your way out the door. Raw veggies such as carrots, celery, cucumbers, jicama, peppers, etc. are great with a low-fat dip such as hummus. Keep trail mix made with nuts, seeds and a little dried fruit on hand.
- **Dinner:** Add fresh or frozen veggies to your favorite pasta sauce or rice dish. Top a baked potato with broccoli and yogurt, sautéed veggies, or with salsa. Replace creamy pasta sauces, with sautéed vegetables or tomato sauce made with healthy olive oil.
- **Dessert:** Choose fruit instead of a richer dessert. Or a single square of dark chocolate.



Tip #2: Bulk up on fiber. Another benefit of eating plant-based foods is that it will also increase your fiber intake. Fiber rich foods include vegetable, fruits, nuts and grains. Fiber is the part of plants that your body can't digest. Fiber plays a key role in keeping your digestive system clean and healthy. It helps keep food moving through your digestive tract and it also moves cancer-causing compounds out before they can create harm. Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. In general, the more natural and unprocessed the food, the higher it is in fiber. There is no fiber in meat, dairy, sugar, or "white" foods like white bread, white rice, and pastries.

High Fiber, cancer fighting foods;

Whole grains: whole wheat pasta, raisin bran, barley, oatmeal, oat bran muffins, popcorn, brown rice, or whole grain bread.

Fruit: raspberries, apples, pears, strawberries, banana, blackberries, blueberries, mango, apricot, citrus fruits, dried fruit, prunes and raisins.

Legumes: lentils, black beans, split peas, lima beans, baked beans, kidney beans, pinto, chick peas, navy beans, and black-eyed peas.

Vegetables: Brussels sprouts, broccoli, spinach, dark green leafy vegetable, peas, artichokes, corn, carrots, tomatoes, potatoes.

Simple ways to add more fiber to your diet:

- Use brown rice instead of white rice.
- Substitute whole-grain bread for white bread.
- Choose a bran muffin over a croissant or pastry.
- Snack on popcorn instead of potato chips.
- Eat fresh fruit such as pears, bananas, blueberries or apples.
- Have a baked sweet potato, including the skin, instead of mashed potatoes and gravy
- Enjoy fresh carrots, celery, or bell peppers with a hummus or salsa, instead of chips and a sour cream dip.
- Use beans instead of ground meat in chili, casseroles, tacos, and even burgers



Tip #3: Cut down on meat. Research shows that vegetarians are about fifty percent less likely to develop cancer than those who eat meat. So what's the link between meat and cancer risk? First, meat lacks fiber and other nutrients that have been shown to have cancer-protective properties. What it does have is abundance of fat, often very high levels of saturated fat. High-fat diets have been linked to higher rates of cancer. And saturated fat is particularly dangerous.

Making better meat and protein choices:

You don't need to cut out meat completely and become a vegetarian. But most people consume far more meat than is healthy. You can cut down your cancer risk substantially by reducing the amount of animal-based products you eat and by choosing healthier meats.

- *Keep meat to a minimum.* Try to keep the total amount of meat in your diet to no more than fifteen percent of your total calories. Ten percent is even better.
- *Eat red meat only occasionally.* Red meat is high in saturated fat.
- *Reduce the portion size of meat in each meal.* The portion should be able to fit in the palm of your hand.
- *Add beans* and other plant-based protein sources to your meals.
- *Choose leaner meats*, such as fish, chicken, or turkey.
- *Avoid processed meats* such as hotdogs, sausage, deli meats, and salami.

Simple ways to reduce or replace meats.

- Replace ground beef with ground turkey or chicken.
- Try veal, lamb, venison or buffalo.
- Eat fish twice a week.
- Use turkey bacon for breakfast or BLT's.
- Soy, beans, or nuts as healthy alternatives.



Tip #4: Choose your fats wisely. Cut out a lot of unhealthy fat. Eating a diet high in fat increases your risk for many types of cancer. But cutting out fat entirely isn't the answer, either. In fact, some types of fat may actually protect against cancer. The trick is to choose your fats wisely and eat them in moderation.

Fats that increase cancer risk – The two most damaging fats are saturated fats and trans fats. Saturated fats are found mainly in animal products such as red meat, whole milk dairy products, and eggs. Trans fats, also called partially hydrogenated oils, are created by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid and less likely to spoil—which is very good for food manufacturers, and very bad for you.

Fats that decrease cancer risk – The best fats are unsaturated fats, which come from plant sources and are liquid at room temperature. Primary sources include olive oil, canola oil, nuts, and avocados. Also focus on omega-3 fatty acids, which fight inflammation and support brain and heart health. Good sources include salmon, tuna, and flaxseeds.

- **Reduce your consumption** of red meat, whole milk, butter, and eggs
- **Cook with olive oil** instead of regular vegetable oil.
- **Check ingredients** on food labels and avoid anything with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils.
- **Trim the fat** off of meat when you do eat it, and avoid eating the skin of the chicken.
- **Limit fast food**, fried foods, and packaged foods, which tend to be high in Trans fats.
- **Eat fish** once or twice a week. Good choices include wild Alaskan salmon, sardines, herring, and black cod.



Tip #5: Choose cancer-fighting foods. Your immune system keeps you healthy by fighting off unwanted attackers in your system, including cancer cells. There are many things you can eat to maximize the strength of your immune system, as well as many cancer-fighting foods. But keep in mind that there is no single miracle food or ingredient that will protect you against cancer. Eating a colorful variety gives you the best protection.

- *Boost your antioxidants.* Antioxidants are powerful vitamins that protect against cancer and help the cells in your body function optimally. Fruits and vegetables are the best sources of antioxidants such as beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E, and selenium.
- *Eat a wide range of brightly colored fruits and vegetables.* Colorful fruits and vegetables are rich in phytochemicals, a potent disease-fighting and immune-boosting nutrient. The greater the variety of colors that you include, the more you will benefit, since different colors are rich in different phytochemicals.
- *Flavor with immune-boosting spices and foods.* Garlic, ginger, and curry powder not only add flavor, but they add a cancer-fighting punch of valuable nutrients. Other good choices include turmeric, basil, rosemary, and coriander. Use them in soups, salads, casseroles, or any other dish.
- *Drink plenty of water.* Water is essential to all bodily processes. It stimulates the immune system, removes waste and toxins, and transports nutrients to all of your organs.



Tip #6: Prepare your food in healthy ways. Choosing healthy food is not the only important factor. It also matters how you prepare and store your food. The way you cook your food can benefit anti-cancer efforts.

Preserving the cancer-fighting benefits of vegetables

Here are a few tips that will help you get the most benefits from eating all those great cancer-fighting vegetables:

- *Eat at least some raw fruits and vegetables.* These have the highest amounts of vitamins and minerals, although cooking some vegetables can make the vitamins more available for our body to use.
- *When cooking vegetables, steam until just tender using a small amount of water.* This preserves more of the vitamins. Overcooking vegetables leaches the vitamins and minerals out. For an extra vitamin boost, use the vegetable cooking water in a soup or another dish.
- *Wash or peel all fruits and vegetables.* Use a vegetable brush for washing. Washing does not eliminate all pesticide residues, but will reduce it.

