

Cancer Prevention Tips for Your Diet

Did you know you can help to reduce your risk of certain cancers by following a healthy lifestyle?

Research shows that many cancers are linked to lifestyle behaviors including unhealthy eating patterns and a lack of physical activity. Eating well can help you prevent and beat cancer in a variety of ways. While there is no guaranteed way to prevent cancer, a healthy lifestyle can help reduce your risk of developing it and positively support treatment and recovery if you are diagnosed with it.

To help reduce your cancer risk, follow these healthy eating tips:

What can you do to reduce your risk of cancer?

1. Maintain or Achieve a Healthy Weight

Excess body weight is associated with an increased risk for several types of cancer. By maintaining a healthy body weight, or losing weight if you have a body mass index (BMI) in the overweight or obese range, you can help to reduce your risk.

2. Limit Added Sugars and Solid Fats.

Limit your intake of foods with added sugars and solid fats that provide a lot of calories but few nutrients. These foods include: sugar-sweetened beverages, highly processed snack foods and desserts. Calories add up fast with these sorts of calorie-dense foods, which may lead to weight gain and leave little room for more healthful, cancer-preventive foods.

3. Include Vegetables, Fruits and Whole Grains

Non starchy vegetables, whole fruits and whole grains are linked with a lower cancer risk. It's not clear which components in vegetables and fruits are most protective against cancer. So enjoy a variety of these foods as they are often rich sources of a variety of nutrients. Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits, and make at least half your grains whole grains.

4. Moderate Your Portions of Red and Processed Meats

Some studies suggest a link between colon and other types of cancer and red meat intake. This is especially true for processed meats such as ham, bacon and hot dogs. If you eat these foods, choose them in moderation. Enjoy a small portion of meat and fill the rest of your plate with vegetables, fruits and whole grains

5. Focus on Plant Proteins.

Beans and lentils are sources of protein, dietary fiber, iron, potassium and other necessary nutrients. Other nutrient-dense plant-based proteins include tofu and tempeh. Eating more plant protein than animal protein is associated with a lower risk of many types of cancers.

6. Avoid or Limit Alcohol.

Alcohol consumption is considered to be a major modifiable risk factor for cancer. Even a moderate amount of alcohol may increase your risk of some types of cancer. If you are of legal drinking age and choose to drink, limit alcoholic beverages to no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men. (A serving of alcohol is considered 1½ fluid ounces of hard liquor, 5 fluid ounces of wine or 12 fluid ounces of beer.)

7. Choose Foods First.

Research suggests the nutrients found naturally in foods offers a protective effect. The same findings do not appear to be true for supplements. Choose nutrient-rich, whole foods and beverages as the best source of nutrients for cancer prevention. Talk to your health care provider before taking any supplements.

