

IS THERE A CANCER AND EATING CONNECTION?



Presented by:

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Is There a Cancer and Eating Connection?

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It's complicated....



It has been challenging for researchers to find direct cause-and-effect relationships between specific foods or nutrients and cancer.

- Foods contain many substances that may either increase or lower cancer risk.
- Most people eat and drink a variety of foods. This creates interactions that are hard to study.



It has been challenging for researchers to find direct cause-and-effect relationships between specific foods or nutrients and cancer. (Continued)

- The effects of a food or nutrient can vary depending on how much of it you eat.
- Some research shows that how a food is prepared may influence its risk or benefits.



Most research points to associations between dietary habits and cancer.

- For the great majority of Americans who do not use tobacco, the most important modifiable determinants of cancer risk are **weight control, dietary choices, and levels of physical activity.**



An estimated 1/3 of some of the most common cancers and 1/4 of cancer overall could be prevented by healthy patterns of diet and physical activity.

The American Institute for Cancer Research and the World Cancer Research Fund (AICR/WCRF) has developed recommendations for cancer prevention that were based on the systematic reviews on literature on food, nutrition and physical activity.



AICR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CANCER PREVENTION

A Blueprint to Beat Cancer

To prevent cancer, people should aim to follow as many of the 10 Cancer Prevention Recommendations as possible. However, any change you make that works toward meeting the goals set out in the Recommendations will go some way to reducing your cancer risk.

EAT A DIET RICH IN WHOLE GRAINS, VEGETABLES, FRUITS AND BEANS

Make whole grains, vegetables, fruits and pulses (legumes) such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet



LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF RED AND PROCESSED MEAT

Eat no more than moderate amounts of red meat, such as beef, pork and lamb. Eat little, if any, processed meat



BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Be physically active as part of everyday life – walk more and sit less



LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR-SWEETENED DRINKS

Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks



LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF "FAST FOODS" AND OTHER PROCESSED FOODS HIGH IN FAT, STARCHES OR SUGARS

Limiting these foods helps control calorie intake and maintain a healthy weight



LIMIT ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

For cancer prevention, it's best not to drink alcohol



FOR MOTHERS: BREASTFEED YOUR BABY, IF YOU CAN

Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby



AFTER A CANCER DIAGNOSIS: FOLLOW OUR RECOMMENDATIONS, IF YOU CAN

Check with your health professional about what is right for you



DO NOT USE SUPPLEMENTS FOR CANCER PREVENTION

Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone



Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk.

Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.

1) Be a healthy weight

Keep your weight within the healthy range and avoid weight gain in adult life

- Next to not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight is the most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of cancer. Aim to be at the lower end of the healthy Body Mass Index (BMI) range.
- Body fat doesn't just sit on our waists – it acts like a 'hormone pump' releasing insulin, estrogen and other hormones into the bloodstream, which can spur cancer growth.



2) Be physically active

Be physically active as part of everyday life— walk more and sit less

- Physical activity helps to lower cancer risk. Aim to build more activity, like brisk walking, into your daily routine.
- Physical activity also helps to prevent weight gain, overweight and obesity, which increase risk of cancer.



2) Be physically active (Continued)

Be physically active as part of everyday life— walk more and sit less

- Scientists recommend that we aim for a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate, or 75 minutes of vigorous, physical activity a week. For cancer prevention and weight control, higher levels provide even more benefit. Work toward achieving 45 to 60 minutes moderate-intensity physical activity daily. Going beyond 60 minutes daily even better.
- Research shows that sedentary behaviors – e.g., sitting at a computer, watching TV, – increase risk for weight gain, overweight and obesity. Break up your day by getting up and walking for a few minutes each hour.

3) Eat a diet rich in whole grains, veggies, fruits and beans

Make whole grains, vegetables, fruits and pulses (legumes) such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet

- Basing our diets around plant foods (like vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans), which contain fiber and other nutrients, can reduce our risk of cancer.
- For good health, AICR recommends that we base all of our meals on plant foods. When preparing a meal, aim to fill at least two-thirds of your plate with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans.

3) Eat a diet rich in whole grains, veggies, fruits and beans (Continued)

Make whole grains, vegetables, fruits and pulses (legumes) such as beans and lentils a major part of your usual daily diet

- As well as containing vitamins and minerals, plant foods are good sources of substances called phytochemicals. These are biologically active compounds, which can help to protect cells in the body from damage that can lead to cancer.
- Plant foods can also help us to maintain a healthy weight because many of them are lower in energy density (calories).

4) Limit consumption of “fast foods” and other processed foods high in fat, starches or sugars

Limiting these foods helps control calorie intake and maintain a healthy weight

- There is strong evidence that consuming "fast-foods" and a "Western-type" diet are causes of weight gain, overweight and obesity, which are linked to 12 cancers.
- Glycemic load also increases risk for endometrial cancer.



5) Limit consumption of red and processed meat

Eat no more than moderate amounts of red meat, such as beef, pork and lamb. Eat little, if any, processed meat

- The evidence that red meat (beef, pork and lamb) is a cause of colorectal cancer is convincing. Studies show, however, that we can consume modest amounts -- 12 to 18 ounces (cooked) per week -- without a measurable increase in colorectal cancer risk.
- But when it comes to processed meat (ham, bacon, salami, hot dogs, sausages) the evidence is just as convincing, and cancer risk begins to increase with even very low consumption.
- This is why the expert panel advises limiting red meat and avoiding processed meat.

6) Limit consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks

Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks

- There is strong evidence that consuming sugar-sweetened beverages causes weight gain, overweight and obesity, linked to 12 cancers.
- Sugar-sweetened beverages provide energy, but may not influence appetite in the same way as food does and can promote overconsumption of calories.



7) Limit alcohol consumption

For cancer prevention, it's best not to drink alcohol

- Previous research has shown that modest amounts of alcohol may have a protective effect against coronary heart disease.
- But for cancer prevention, the evidence is clear and convincing: alcohol in any form is a potent carcinogen. **It's linked to 6 different cancers.** The best advice for those concerned about cancer is not to drink.
- If you do choose to drink alcohol, however, limit your consumption to one drink for women and two for men per day.

8) Do not use supplements for cancer prevention

Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone

- For most people, it is possible to obtain adequate nutrition from a healthy diet that includes the right foods and drinks.
- The panel doesn't discourage the use of multivitamins or specific supplements for those sub-sections of the population who stand to benefit from them, such as women of childbearing age and the elderly. They simply caution against expecting any dietary supplement to lower cancer risk as well as a healthy diet can.

8) Do not use supplements for cancer prevention (Continued)

Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone

- High-dose beta-carotene supplements have been linked to an increased risk for lung cancer in current and former smokers. It's always best to discuss any dietary supplement with your doctor or a registered dietitian.

9) For mothers: breastfeed your baby, if you can

Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby

- According to the expert report, breastfeeding benefits both mother and child.
- There is strong evidence that breastfeeding helps protect against breast cancer in the mother. There are likely two reasons for this. First, breastfeeding lowers the levels of some cancer-related hormones in the mother's body. Second, at the end of breastfeeding, the body gets rid of any cells in the breast that may have DNA damage.

9) For mothers: breastfeed your baby, if you can (Continued)

Breastfeeding is good for both mother and baby

- In addition, babies who are breastfed are less likely to become overweight and obese. Overweight and obese children tend to remain overweight in adult life.
- If you're planning to breastfeed your baby, your doctor or certified lactation consultant will be able to provide more information and support.

10) After a cancer diagnosis: follow our Recommendations, if you can

Check with your health professional about what is right for you

- Anyone who has received a diagnosis of cancer should receive specialized nutritional advice from an appropriately trained professional. Once treatment has been completed, if you are able to do so (and unless otherwise advised), aim to follow AICR's cancer prevention recommendations for diet, physical activity and healthy weight maintenance.
- For breast cancer survivors, there is persuasive evidence that nutritional factors and physical activity reliably predict important outcomes from breast cancer.



Are there any specific foods or nutrients that fight cancer?

No single food or food component can protect you against cancer by itself. But research shows that a diet filled with a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and other plant foods helps lower risk for many cancers.

Foods Can Fight Cancer Both Directly...

- In laboratory studies, many individual minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals demonstrate anti-cancer effects. Evidence suggests it is the synergy of compounds **in the overall diet** that offers the strongest cancer protection.

... And Indirectly

- AICR research finds that excess [body fat increases the risk of 12 cancers](#). Vegetables and fruits are relatively low in calories. Whole grains and beans are rich in fiber, which also helps with weight management. That is one reason AICR recommends filling at least 2/3 of your plate with plant foods.

Credible Cancer and Nutrition Resources

- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org
- American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR): www.aicr.org
- National Cancer Institute: <http://cancer.gov>
- Chemocare, Cleveland Clinic Cancer Care Center: www.chemocare.com
- Chemocare, Cleveland Clinic Cancer Care Center: www.chemocare.com
- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center: www.mskcc.org
- Oncolink, Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania: www.oncolink.org

Thank You!

For more information about the food connection and cancer or to request a speaker for your worksite on any cancer-related topic **Call: 602.699.3366**





Q&A

**PLEASE ENTER YOUR
QUESTIONS IN THE CHAT.**

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