



10 Cancer Nutrition Truths!

" More than half of the estimated cancer deaths projected to occur in the United States this year are related to preventable causes, states a major report on cancer research by the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)."

The following recommendations for cancer prevention are drawn from the WCRF/AICR Second Expert Report.

DO NOT SMOKE OR USE TOBACCO.

- RECOMMENDATION:** After treatment, cancer survivors should follow the recommendations for cancer prevention.

WHY? The evidence is not yet clear enough to be able to make any specific recommendations for cancer survivors in general, or for those who are survivors of any specific form of cancer. These recommendations can also reduce the risk of other chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes.
- RECOMMENDATION:** Eat more of a variety of **vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes** such as beans.

WHY? Plant foods give important nutrients called phytochemicals, which is the basis for a cancer fighting diet. They can neutralize damage to cells (antioxidants) and support the immune system.
- RECOMMENDATION:** Don't use supplements to protect against cancer.

WHY? In general, the best source of nourishment is food and drink, not dietary supplements. Nutrient-rich whole foods contain substances that are necessary for good health—like fiber, vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals. Foods provide us with these nutrients in the proportion that they are grown, NOT in highly concentrated proportions.
- RECOMMENDATION:** Avoid sugary drinks. Limit consumption of energy-dense foods.

WHY? The myth that 'sugar feeds cancer' is not completely true. However, regularly consuming sugary drinks contributes to weight gain. Water is the best alternative. Unsweetened tea and coffee are also healthy options.
- RECOMMENDATION:** Limit consumption of red meats (such as beef, pork and lamb) and avoid processed meats.

WHY? The experts found convincing evidence that red meat is a cause of colorectal cancer and choosing processed meat increases the chances of colorectal cancer. Red meat refers to beef, pork and lamb—foods like hamburgers, steak, pork chops and roast lamb. The term processed meat refers to meats preserved by smoking, curing or salting, or by the addition of preservatives. Examples include ham, bacon, pastrami and salami, as well as hot dogs and sausages.

Cancer Dietitian

Lifestyle tips for prevention and survivorship



6. **RECOMMENDATION:** If consumed at all, limit alcoholic drinks to 2 for men and 1 for women a day.
WHY? There is convincing evidence that alcohol increases the risk of cancer of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus and breast, as well as colorectal cancer in men. Alcoholic drinks also probably increase the risk of colorectal cancer in women as well as liver cancer.
7. **RECOMMENDATION:** Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium).
WHY? The expert panel found that salt and salt-preserved foods probably increase the chance of developing stomach cancer. Studies have shown that high salt intake can damage the lining of the stomach.
8. **RECOMMENDATION:** Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day. Limit sedentary habits.
WHY? Our bodies function best when we are using them. Physical activity has been proven to reduce cancer-related fatigue, improves our mood and helps keep our metabolism at a healthy level.
9. **RECOMMENDATION:** Be as lean as possible without becoming underweight.
WHY? Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your risk of cancer. We also know that where we store extra weight affects cancer risk. Scientists have discovered that carrying excess fat around our waists can be particularly harmful – it acts like a ‘hormone pump’ releasing estrogen into the bloodstream as well as raising levels of other hormones in the body. This is strongly linked to colon cancer and probably to cancers of the pancreas and endometrium (lining of the uterus), as well as breast cancer (in postmenopausal women).
10. **RECOMMENDATION:** It is best for mothers to breastfeed exclusively for up to 6 months and then add other liquids and foods.
WHY? The evidence that breastfeeding protects mothers against breast cancer is convincing. Breastfeeding lowers the levels of some cancer-related hormones in the mother’s body, reducing the risk of breast cancer. Having been breastfed probably protects children against overweight and obesity.

A large part of this information came from the American Institute for Cancer Research. They are a great source of evidence-based information on nutrition and cancer and they have great recipes and a list of Foods that Fight Cancer! Check them out at www.aicr.org.

Visit <https://bit.ly/nutritiontruths> to see Julie's webinar on Cancer Nutrition Truths!

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