

Diet and Health:

Ten Tips for Cancer Prevention

There are many factors that go into causing cancer in an individual. Genetics is a big factor. Some food actually contribute to the development of cancer, other foods lessen the risk. Living a healthy lifestyle, however, will reduce your chances of getting cancer.

The following dietary precautions or tips reduce the risk of getting cancer:

1. Eat your spinach (and other veggies).

Fruits and vegetables contain nutrients like vitamin A and C, which may help lower cancer risk. They are also low in fat and high in fiber. Eat one extra serving of fruit or vegetables each day. Work towards a total of at least five each day.

A serving is:

- One medium piece of fresh fruit.
- One-half cup of fruit or vegetables (raw or cooked).
- One cup of raw, leafy vegetables such as spinach or lettuce.
- Three-quarters of a cup of juice.

2. Cook lean meat the lean way.

- Choose unmarbled cuts of round, shank, tenderloin or sirloin beef, center loin or tenderloin pork, fish, skinless poultry and other lean meats.
- Trim off outside fat. Then cook on a rack so fat drips away from meat, or drain fat from meat cooked in a skillet.
- Skinless Poultry won't be dried out if you cover it for at least part of the cooking time and avoid overcooking.

3. Make meat portions small.

Fat adds up quickly with excessive portions, even of lean meat.

• A healthful serving of meat is about the size of a deck of cards. Translate that to 100 g of boneless, cooked meat (four ounces before cooking)

• Make your limit 200 g (cooked weight per day).

4. Indulge in pasta, bagels, bread and other lowfat grain products.

• Many grain products are short on fat and calories, while often rich in nutrients and dietary fiber. Enjoy six or more servings a day

• Make at least four of those servings whole grains, like whole wheat bread and pasta, brown rice, and whole-grain cereals, since they are even higher in fiber and nutrients than other grain products.

5. Get adventurous! Try new fruit or vegetable each week.

• Make healthy eating fun and boost nutrition by trying many different fruits and vegetables. Variety is the best assurance of getting the various vitamins, minerals and other food components being studied for their cancer preventing effects.

• When selecting unfamiliar fruits, be sure they are ripe (for best taste and nutrition). If you need help, check with your grocer.

• Before you decide whether you like a new fruit or vegetable, serve it at least three or four times, perhaps even prepared in different ways. It takes time to develop the taste for new foods, but it is worth it!

6. Choose slimmed-down cheeses

Lowfat cheeses offer all the important nutrients in traditional cheese with less fat

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and fewer calories.

- Try part-skim mozzarella, farmer's cheese, ricotta, cottage cheese, and new reduced-fat versions of traditional cheeses such as cheddar and Swiss.
- Read labels carefully. "Lite" cheese is not necessarily low in fat.
- Choose lowfat versions of other dairy products too. Opt for milk that's 1% fat or less, use plain yogurt instead of sour cream for dips, ice milk or frozen yogurt instead of ice cream.

7. Trade in your chips for popcorn.

Fat in snacks can add up to sabotage another-wise lowfat diet. Try some of these lowfat choices:

- Fresh fruit or vegetables
- Dried fruits such as raisins and dried apricots
- Pretzels, breadsticks, lowfat crackers (such as rye wafers, flatbreads, and graham crackers), mixtures of your favorite dry cereals.
- Popcorn with no or very little oil

8. Add Flavor without fat.

- For veggies, sandwiches and salads: substitute spicy mustard, lemon juice, reduced-fat salad dressing, salsa, flavored vinegar or lowfat yogurt for mayonnaise, salad dressing and sour cream
- Season with herbs and spices. Stick to one or two herbs per dish until you master the art. Since dried herbs are more concentrated than fresh, use 1/4 to 1/3 as much.
- Try lowfat sauces. Poach or bake chicken and fish with tomato or orange juice. Boil rice or couscous with low-sodium bouillon. Substitute evaporated skim milk for cream in white sauces.
- Spread honey, low-sugar fruit spread, or cottage cheese on bread or toast.

- Use less butter or margarine, a teaspoon instead of a tablespoon.

9. Order wisely when ordering out.

Don't leave healthy eating habits at home. Use what you've already learned in this pamphlet to help you select wisely, then:

- Insure a nutritious meal. Ask about ingredients or preparation methods unclear from the menu.
- Make reasonable special requests: Ask for sauces and dressings on the side, little or no butter, etc.
- If you eat fast food in restaurants often, choose lower-fat selections most of the time. These generally include: grilled (not fried) chicken sandwich without mayonnaise, garden salad with light dressing, pizza with veggies, cheese-less or reduced-fat burger.

10. Stop number crunching.

It doesn't take a math whiz to eat a healthy diet. Learn which foods you should eat more or less of, and you won't have to count calories or even grams of fats. Just be sure to balance higher fat treats with more nutritious, lowfat selections.

One Step at a Time

A better diet doesn't happen over night. Make changes slowly but consistently, and eventually the new habits will be purely routine. If you try something new and it doesn't work out, don't give up. Think about why it didn't work, and try to find a way around any obstacles.

Don't worry about trying to create a "perfect diet". While many aspects of eating have been linked to minor increase or decrease in cancer risk, the overall balance of foods in our diet actually seems to have the greatest effect. Establish a lowfat diet that uses fruits, vegetables and whole-grain foods abundantly, and you need not worry about each new cancer risk in the news.