

Food & Nutrition Newsletter



Fall 2018

Reduce Cancer Risk

Cancer. Nobody likes to think about it, yet most of us know of at least one person affected by it. The good news is that eating a balanced diet and other healthy habits, including not smoking and avoiding excess sun exposure, help to reduce cancer risk. New recommendations from the American Cancer Institute/World Cancer Research Foundation's Third Expert Report can minimize your chance for cancer.

Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Next to not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight is the most important thing you can do to reduce cancer risk. Excess body fat results in elevated blood levels of hormones, such as estrogen and insulin, which can spur cancer growth. Obesity is associated with 12 types of cancer.

Get regular physical activity.

Emerging evidence suggests that sitting for long periods increases some of the risk factors for cancer. Physical activity in any form helps to lower cancer risk because it helps you to avoid weight gain, and keeps hormone levels in check. Maximize the benefits of physical activity by exercising at a moderate pace (for example, walking) for 150 minutes or at a vigorous pace (running) for 75 minutes every week. Try to spread exercise over five days, if possible. (See 10 Tips to Move Around More).

Eat a plant-based diet.

Plant foods, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds, contain fiber and other nutrients, including beneficial plant compounds called phytonutrients, that contribute to a lower cancer risk. At every meal, make half your plate fruits and vegetables, one quarter of it whole grains, and fill the remainder with lean animal-based protein, such as chicken and fish, or plant-based protein foods, including soy and other legumes.

Limit highly-processed foods.

All food is "processed," but some more than others. Most highly-processed fare is rich in refined grains, added sugars, fat, and sodium. A steady intake of fast foods and other processed convenience items is linked to obesity.

Limit "red" and processed meat.

The research linking meat (beef, pork, and lamb) and colorectal cancer is

convincing. However, studies show it's possible to consume 12 to 18 ounces (cooked) weekly of red meat without a measurable increase in colorectal cancer risk. The news isn't so positive for processed meat, (ham, bacon, salami, hot dogs, sausages). Evidence says that even small amounts boost colorectal cancer risk.

Limit sugary drinks.

There is no direct link between added sugars and cancer, but there is strong evidence that consuming sugary beverages causes weight gain, overweight, and obesity.

Limit alcohol intake.

Modest amounts of alcohol may protect against heart disease, but experts consider alcohol potent cancer-starter. Alcohol intake is linked to cancers of the breast, esophagus, liver, colon/rectum, stomach and mouth/larynx/pharynx. If you choose alcohol, limit intake to one drink for women and two for men per day.

FAST FACT:

New guidelines suggest that adults who are at average risk for colon cancer should start getting tested for the condition at age 45. Anyone with a first-degree relative diagnosed before age 60 should begin testing at either at age 40, or 10 years before the age of diagnosis of the youngest relative who had colorectal cancer.

10 TIPS TO MOVE AROUND MORE

It's not always easy to get the daily physical activity you need. Here are some tips that can help you move around more often.

- Get up from your desk or the couch and walk around for five minutes every hour.
- Pick an activity that you enjoy, not one that you think you should do.
- Exercise with a group or an exercise buddy. It's motivating to have someone by your side.
- Take a 20-minute walk at lunch time, and work in another 10-minute walk during the day.
- Use the stairs whenever possible.
- Prioritize exercise by adding it to your schedule.
- Take active vacations, or find more ways to move around while you're away.
- When using public transportation, get off a few blocks earlier and walk the rest of the way to your destination.
- Track your activity. You'll be more aware of your achievements, and more accountable to yourself.
- Always have a Plan B. If you run, bike, or walk outside most of the time, figure out an alternative indoor activity when the weather is bad so that you don't skip exercise.



Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

Enjoy these healthy and delicious no-bake cookies as part of a meal, such as breakfast, or as a hearty snack!

Makes 10 cookies

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| 2 cups raisins | 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract |
| 1 cup chunky or creamy peanut butter
(use natural peanut butter for no added sugar) | 2 cups quick oats, toasted* |

Place raisins, peanut butter, and vanilla extract in food processor. Blend on HIGH until well combined, about 45 seconds. The mixture will resemble a paste. Place the raisin mixture in a medium bowl. Add oatmeal and combine well, using your hands, if necessary. Form into 10 cookies or balls. Store in airtight container.

*Toasting oatmeal makes it taste better in no-bake recipes. (You can skip this step if want.) To toast oats, preheat oven to 350°F. Spread the oats evenly on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes before using.

Per serving: 292 calories; 8 grams protein; 39 grams carbohydrate; 5 grams fiber; 14 grams fat (2 grams saturated fat); 0 milligrams cholesterol; 164 milligrams sodium; 60 milligrams calcium.

ASK THE RD:

Q.

What supplements should I take to prevent cancer?

A.

There are no such supplements. A balanced diet that promotes a healthy weight and offers adequate fiber from plant foods is considered the gold standard for helping prevent cancer, recurrences, and secondary cancers. However, multivitamins support health by filling in small nutrient gaps. Many people stand to gain from taking a daily multivitamin, including women of childbearing years (ages 15-45), older people who don't eat enough, and people who restrict one or more food groups. Multivitamins and other single supplements, such as vitamin C, lack energy, protein, dietary fiber, and other nutrients, which is why they are supplements, and not substitutes, for a balanced eating plan. It's best to avoid beta-carotene supplements, as they have been linked to increased lung disease risk in current and former smokers.