

Cancer Risk Reduction through Nutrition

The information below may reduce your risk of a cancer diagnosis or recurrence. If you have questions about your nutrition needs, ask your health care provider to schedule an appointment with the dietitian.

- **Eat a diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and beans.**
 - To start, cover at least 2/3 of your plate with plant foods such as whole grains, vegetables, fruit and beans.
 - Fill the last 1/3 of your plate with animal-based, protein rich foods, such as seafood, poultry and dairy foods. On occasion, you can fill this with lean red meat.
 - Limit “fast foods” and other processed foods that are high in fat, starches or sugars.
 - Eating fewer processed foods helps you control your calorie intake and makes it easier to keep a healthy weight.
 - Fuel up on minimally processed vegetables, fruit, whole grains and beans.
 - Limit processed foods such as chips, cookies, candy bars, desserts, baked goods, sugary cereals and fried foods.
 - Read nutrition facts labels on packaged foods.
- **Limit red and processed meats.**
 - Limit animal foods to no more than 1/3 of your plate.
 - Eat no more than 18 ounces of red meat per week. Keep in mind that 3 ounces (1 serving) of red meat is about the size of a deck of cards.
 - Eat little, if any, processed meat. This includes sandwich meats, ham, bacon, pastrami, salami, hot dogs and sausages.
 - Processed meats are preserved by smoking, curing, salting, fermenting or have added chemical preservatives. Cancer-causing substances (carcinogens) can form when meats are preserved.
- **Limit sugar-sweetened drinks**
 - Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks.
 - In excess, sugary drinks can contribute to weight gain that increases your cancer risk.
 - Drink water alternatives such as sparkling water (without sugar) or hot or iced tea.
- **Limit alcohol**
 - For cancer prevention, it is best not to drink alcohol. If you drink alcohol, limit to no more than 2 drinks per day for men and no more than 1 drink per day for women (one drink is equal to 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1 ½ ounces of liquor).

Do not use supplements for cancer prevention. Try to meet your nutritional needs through diet alone.

Patient Education



Resources

MD Anderson Cancer Prevention Center – www.mdanderson.org/prevention

MD Anderson At the Table Cookbook – www.mdanderson.org/recipes

Fruits & Veggies-More Matters – www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

AICR – www.aicr.org

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics – <http://www.eatright.org/Public/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention –
www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/fruits_vegetables.html

Nutrition.gov – www.nutrition.gov

United States Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Data Laboratory –
<https://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/>

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