

Plan an Anti-Cancer Diet



The American Cancer Society estimates that one-third of cancer deaths that occur in the U.S. each year are due to dietary factors, inactivity, and being overweight. It's hard to say exactly how much changing your diet reduces the risk of cancer, but it's fair to say that the following steps can help.

Eat less fat, especially from animal sources.

These include foods such as beef, pork, butter, cream, sour cream, and cheese. Choose non-fat and low-fat dairy products and other foods low in fat. Replace fat-rich foods with fruits, vegetables, grains, and beans.

Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain products like cereal and bread.

Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Fruits and vegetables help protect against some cancers due to the vitamins, minerals, fiber, and plant chemicals they contain. Vary your choices. Foods with whole grains (wheat, rice, oats, and barley) also contain vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. Have six to 11 servings of whole-grain breads, cereals, etc. each day.

Eat fewer cured, grilled, or smoked foods.

When eaten in excess, these foods may increase the risk of stomach and esophageal cancer. This increase may be due to one or more of the following: nitrates and nitrites they contain; their high fat content; or changes that occur when they're cooked or processed.

Limit consumption of alcohol, if you drink at all.

Combined with cigarette smoking, over-consumption of alcohol has been shown to increase the risk of cancer of the mouth, esophagus, and larynx. Also, alcohol may promote breast cancer regardless of whether you smoke or not. Excessive drinking also contributes to liver cancer. Cancer risk increases with the amount of alcohol consumed. The risk may start to rise having as few as two drinks per day. A drink is defined as 12 ounces of regular beer, 4 to 5 ounces of wine, or 1-1/2 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits, like vodka or whiskey.

Be physically active and maintain a desirable weight.

Obesity is associated with an increased risk of cancers of the colon and rectum, prostate, breast (for women past menopause), endometrium, and kidney. Lose weight if you are overweight. Exercise on a regular basis.