

Nutrition for the Cancer Survivor

Proper nutrition is essential for cancer survivors as it plays a vital role in recovery, improving quality of life, and reducing the risk of certain cancer recurrences. After cancer treatment, the body requires adequate nutrients to repair tissues, maintain energy levels, and support the immune system. A well-balanced diet can also help manage side effects from treatment such as fatigue, weight loss, and digestive issues. Ways that you can eat healthier and live a healthy lifestyle are discussed below.

Keep a Healthy Weight

It is important to maintain a healthy weight. Excess weight puts you at increased risk for cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Research suggests that excess weight may also be associated with an increased risk of cancer recurrence and a decreased survival rate. Even if you don't achieve your "ideal" body weight, a weight loss of 5-10% over six months to a year can reduce your risk for certain diseases.

Eat Plenty of Fruits and Vegetables

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables has many health benefits, including lowering your risk for certain cancers. Plants have natural compounds (such as antioxidants and phytonutrients) that can help improve health and prevent certain diseases. Research also suggests that eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, along with regular exercise, may help lower breast cancer recurrence. We recommend eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

Choose Healthy Fats

- A diet that is high in saturated and trans fats (bad fats) can lead to weight gain, high cholesterol and other negative health outcomes.
- Try to avoid foods that are high in bad fats such as butter, fatty cuts of meat, coconut and palm oil, margarine and other highly processed foods that contain hydrogenated oils.
- There are certain fats that are good for us; they are called monounsaturated fats and Omega 3 fats (good fats).
- Some examples of healthy or good fats are avocados, olive oil, olive, nuts, salmon, and tuna.

Create a Healthy Plate

Eating a well-balanced diet is important. Try to aim for $\frac{1}{2}$ -plate of vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ -plate of complex carbohydrates (such as whole grains, bread, cereal, and rice) and $\frac{1}{4}$ -plate lean protein. Some examples of lean proteins are fish, chicken, or beans. Try to avoid fatty and processed proteins such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and red meat.

Limit Your Sugar Intake

Sugar does not feed cancer, but it does lack many nutrients that offer health benefits. It can also promote undesired weight gain and, if eaten in excess, may lead to undesirable changes in insulin production and

regulation. Preliminary research suggests that excess insulin can promote tumor cell growth. Try to limit your intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (such as soda, sports drinks, and fruit drinks), drink water and other unsweetened beverages instead. Try to limit or avoid high-sugar foods (such as pastries, candy, and sugar-sweetened breakfast cereals)

Drink in Moderation, If at All

Research shows a link between drinking alcohol and the risk of developing some cancers. Minimizing alcohol consumption may help lower your risk of developing cancer. We recommend limiting alcohol intake to one drink or less per day for women and two or fewer drinks per day for men.