Nutrition to Reduce Cancer Risk

Cancer risk is influenced by many factors, including genetics, environment, physical activity, body weight, tobacco exposure, and nutrition. No single food can prevent cancer, but your everyday eating patterns can play an important role in reducing risk.

Focus on more protective foods, fewer foods linked to increased risk, and habits you can sustain.

Fill Your Plate with Plants

Plant foods contain **phytochemicals**, which are naturally occurring compounds that help protect cells and support overall health.

Blue & purple
Berries, purple grapes, red cabbage, purple sweet potatoes

Red
Tomatoes, watermelon, pink grapefruit, red peppers, strawberries

Orange & yellow
Carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash, oranges, mangoes, yellow peppers

Aim for **⅔ of your plate** to come from plant foods and eat a variety of colors throughout the week.

Green
Broccoli, kale, spinach, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and other leafy greens

White & brown
Garlic, onions, mushrooms, cauliflower, and whole grains

Other plant foods
Beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, tea, and cocoa

Get at least 25 grams of fiber daily

Fiber feeds beneficial gut bacteria, supports healthy blood sugar, and promotes regular bowel movements.

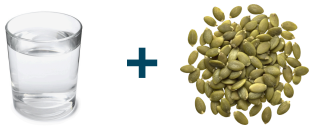
3 Ways to Get More Fiber

ADD → Seeds to meals. Ideas: flax, chia, hemp, or pumpkin seeds.

SWAP → Choose oats, quinoa, brown rice, or whole-grain bread in place of refined grains.

INCLUDE → Fruit + vegetables with every meal and snack.

Don't Forget Fluids!
Aim for ~11-15 cups of total fluids per day. Pairing fiber-rich foods with adequate fluids supports digestion.



Choose Proteins Wisely

Some protein choices are associated with greater cancer risk when eaten frequently, while others can be enjoyed more often.

LIMIT*	CHECK	CHOOSE
Processed meats such as hot dogs, sausages, bacon, and deli meats.	Aim for less than 18 ounces of red meat per week.	Fish, poultry, eggs, beans, lentils, yogurt.

***Also limit highly processed foods that are high in added sugar and low in fiber.**

Rethink What You Drink

Alcohol is associated with an increased risk of several types of cancer. Sugar-sweetened beverages can also contribute to excess calorie intake, high blood sugar, and obesity, which are linked to several cancers.

DRINK LESS → Limit alcohol or avoid it when possible.

CHOOSE MOST OFTEN → Water and unsweetened beverages.

CHECK THE LABEL → When choosing a sweetened drink, look for options with less than 6 grams of added sugar whenever possible.

TRY THIS: Swap one soda, sweet tea, energy drink, or sweetened coffee for water or an unsweetened option.

Build Habits That Support a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight can help lower the risk of several types of cancer. Focus on sustainable habits rather than perfection.

MOVE REGULARLY → Break up long periods of sitting with 5–10 minutes of movement.

MOVE MORE → Aim for about 2.5 hours of moderate activity each week, based on your abilities and fitness level.

EAT MINDFULLY → Check in with your hunger before eating and slow down enough to notice when you're satisfied.

Start Here

You don't need to change everything at once. Choose one action to start this week.

- [ ] Add one more plant food to your day
- [ ] Swap a refined grain for a whole grain
- [ ] Add a fiber-rich food to one meal
- [ ] Replace one sugary drink with water
- [ ] Choose fish, poultry, or beans instead of processed meat
- [ ] Add a 10-minute movement break to your day

Small choices, repeated consistently, add up.

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