

Nutrition and Cancer Prevention

SIMMONSCOOPER CANCER INSTITUTE

AT SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



A healthy you

Eat a diet low in fat and high in fruits and vegetables, avoid or limit alcohol consumption to no more than one drink daily, and work to maintain a healthy body weight. This along with physical activity, avoiding tobacco products and limiting sun exposure will lower your risks for certain cancers and put you on your way to a healthy lifestyle.

Impact of diet and cancer

It is estimated that 30-40% of cancer cases are preventable through diet. People whose diets are rich in fruit and vegetables have a lower risk of getting certain cancers. These include cancers of the lung, mouth, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, colon, rectum, breast, pancreas, ovaries, larynx and bladder. They may also reduce their risk of prostate cancer. Not only does a diet high in fruits and vegetables help to protect against cancer, it lowers a person's risk of diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. Fruits and vegetables are lower in calories than processed food and help maintain a healthy body weight. Eating a healthy diet, which includes fruits and vegetables helps achieve overall health and well being.

5-9 daily servings of fruits and vegetables

Experts recommend consuming 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. This includes consuming 2 to 4 servings of fruits and 3 to 5 servings of vegetables. Vegetables should include 1 to 2 servings of dark-green and deep yellow vegetables. White potatoes show no evidence of protecting against cancer.

Learning to eat more fruits and vegetables doesn't have to be hard. It can be as easy as adding fruit to cereal or eating an apple instead of a bag of potato chips. Try adding a serving of fruit and vegetables at each of the three daily meals and as a snack. To learn more about eating 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables, visit www.5aday.gov.

Low fat diet

Studies indicate a link between a diet high in fat and certain cancers, particularly colon, prostate, and endometrial cancers. Eating a low-fat diet can help maintain a healthy body weight. Try avoiding or limiting fried, greasy and fatty foods. Use olive oil or canola oil instead of shortening or lard to cut down on saturated fats. When grocery shopping, shop around the perimeter of the store verses going down the aisles. This helps to limit purchasing packaged foods which are higher in fat. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend no more than 10 percent of calories come from saturated fatty acids and no more than 30 percent from total fat.

Body weight

Studies show a link between obesity and cancer. Experts conclude that obesity is associated with cancers of the colon, breast (postmenopausal), endometrium, kidney, and esophagus and possibly gallbladder, ovarian and pancreas cancers. Eat three balanced meals a day with snacks when hungry. Incorporate 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables with your meals and snacks and choose low fat foods. This coupled with a physical activity routine will help to achieve a healthy body weight.

Alcohol

Women who consume more than one alcohol drink and men who consume more than two alcohol drinks a day increase their risk for certain cancers. For both men and women these include mouth, esophagus, pharynx, larynx and liver cancers. For women it increases the risk for breast cancer. Heavy alcohol use may increase the risk of ovarian cancer for women and colorectal cancer for both men and women. Using tobacco and alcohol increases the risk for head and neck cancers.

 *SIU School of Medicine*