

EATING HEALTHY

Assuming cancer survivors are in stable health after cancer treatment, the American Cancer Society recommends the same nutrition guidelines are followed as for cancer prevention. The same factors that can increase cancer risk may also promote cancer coming back after treatment. Follow these recommended guidelines for establishing and maintaining a healthy diet.



Food Safety Tips

Cancer survivors with a weakened immune system from cancer treatment, such as chemotherapy, should take precautionary measures when handling food to avoid infection.

- Wash hands before eating or preparing food
- Wash vegetables and fruit well
- Do not cross-contaminate raw meats, fish, poultry, and eggs with other foods
- Sanitize items that have come in contact with raw meats, fish, poultry, and eggs by washing them in hot, soapy water or by using a fresh solution made of one part bleach and 10 parts water
- Cook foods to proper temperatures
- Avoid raw honey, milk, and fruit juice; choose pasteurized versions instead

Vegetables/Fruits

- Try to eat at least 2½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day, including citrus fruits and dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables.
- Eat a variety of vegetables and fruits, varying the types and colors.
- Emphasize whole vegetables and fruits over juice. If choosing to drink juice, select 100% vegetable or fruit juices.

Grains

- Choose whole grains like brown rice and whole grain bread instead of refined grain products such as white rice and white bread.

Dairy

- Choose low-fat milk and dairy or dairy alternative products, like soy and almond milk.

Proteins

- Choose options such as fish, poultry or beans instead of red meat.
- Limit intake of red meat (beef, pork, or lamb) to no more than three to four servings (12-18 ounces) per week.
- If you eat red meat, choose lean cuts and eat smaller portions. Choose cuts with “loin” or “round” in the name or on the label, or look for cuts that do not have a lot of fat.
- Avoid processed, salt-cured, or smoked meats, such as bacon, sausage, deli meats, and hot dogs.

Low-Nutrient Foods

- Drink mostly water and unsweetened drinks. Limit intake of sugar-sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, sports drinks, and fruit-flavored drinks.
- Eat smaller portions of high-calorie foods, such as french fries, chips, ice cream, donuts, and other sweets.

References & Resources

American Cancer Society, Eating Well After Treatment

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition/after-treatment-ends.html>

American Cancer Society, Eating Well During Treatment

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition/once-treatment-starts.html>

American Cancer Society, Food Safety During Cancer Treatment

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition/weak-immune-system.html>

American Cancer Society, Managing Eating Problems Caused by Cancer Treatments

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition/common-problems.html>

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Food Safety for People with Cancer Infographic

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/sites/default/files/2019-05/cancer-and-food-safety-infographic.jpg>

To find a dietitian near you that specializes in cancer, use the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics search tool at:

<https://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert>

United States Department of Agriculture, Choose My Plate

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Visit health.mo.gov/cancer for more important tips on surviving cancer.



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Comprehensive Cancer Control Program
PO Box 570 · Jefferson City, MO · 65102-0570
573.522.2806

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