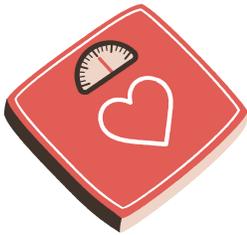


10 Lifestyle Modifications that Decrease Cancer Risk

LISA ANDREWS, MED, RD, LD

While genetics, smoking, and other lifestyle factors affect your risk of cancer, diet continues to take precedence in the prevention of cancer. A recent study shows that following the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) Cancer Prevention Recommendations cuts the risk of breast, colorectal, and lung cancers (1). Below are the AICR's ten recommendations:



1: Achieve a healthy weight.

Unfortunately, being overweight or obese raises your risk of certain cancers, including breast, ovarian, pancreatic, and colorectal cancer. Seek the help of a registered dietitian to help you reach a realistic, healthy weight (2).



2: Stay active.

Regular physical activity aids in weight management and has been found to reduce the risk of cancer. Find an activity you love and keep it up (3).



3: Include more whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and beans in your diet.

Time and time again, plant-based foods have been found to reduce the risk of cancer. Eating more plants helps protect against several cancers of the digestive tract in particular (4).



4: Reduce your intake of fast food and highly processed food high in fats and sugars.

Make sure your food has "food" in it. Fast food and ultra-processed convenience food and snacks are higher in sugar, fat, and salt but lower in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. These foods are also calorie-dense, which increases the risk of weight gain.



5: Cut back on red and processed meat.

"More plants, less cow" is a mantra I use often. Red and processed meats have been linked with several types of cancer, particularly those of the gastrointestinal tract. They are also linked with higher rates of heart disease (5).



6: Limit sugary drinks.

A lemonade now and then won't lead to cancer. However, excessive intake of sugary beverages may lead to weight gain and obesity, which does raise cancer risk. Try flavored seltzer water instead!



7: Be sober curious.

Studies to date do not show many health benefits of alcohol consumption. Even moderate intake has been linked with depression, dementia, hypertension, and breast cancer (6).



8: Eat food (not supplements) to prevent cancer.

Supplements may seem like an easy fix to get more vitamin C or beta-carotene in your diet, but they have not been shown to prevent cancer, and in some cases, may increase cancer risk (7). Include more fruits, vegetables, and other plant-based foods in your diet for antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and fiber to prevent cancer.



9: Moms: breastfeed your babies if you're able.

In addition to antibodies being passed on to your newborn, breastfeeding has been found to be protective for the mother. It's also less expensive than baby formula (8).



10: If diagnosed with cancer, follow your healthcare provider's recommendations if possible.

Chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery may seem ominous for someone with a cancer diagnosis. But these treatments also save lives. Discuss your options with your healthcare team to see what's right for you.

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