

A Healthy Diet and Physical Activity Help Reduce Your Cancer Risk

Eating smarter and being more active will help you feel better and reduce your cancer risk. These guidelines for nutrition and physical activity were developed by the American Cancer Society to help you reduce your risk of cancer.

How Can I Use These Guidelines?

You may already be following our advice. If you are not and want to make changes:

- Try some of the tips here.
- Start slowly if you wish—small steps can add up to big changes!

Get to and Stay at a Healthy Weight Throughout Your Life

- Aim to be as lean as possible without being underweight. If you are overweight or obese, losing even a few pounds will improve your health and is a good place to start. The best way to get and stay leaner is to combine a healthy diet with plenty of physical activity.
- Being overweight or obese is linked with an increased risk of developing several types of cancer (and other serious health problems). Overweight and obese people can lower their risk for these health problems by losing weight.

The Right Weight

Knowing your body mass index (BMI) can tell you if your weight is right for someone of your height. You can find your BMI by using a simple chart such as the one online at <http://www.cancer.org> (search for “BMI calculator”) or by asking your doctor. Watching what and how much you eat and being more active are keys to weight control.

Be Physically Active

Physical activity can lower the risk of several types of cancer by helping you get to and stay at a healthy weight and by affecting the levels of some hormones that contribute to cancer formation.

How Much Activity Do I Need?

- **Adults:** Get at least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week. You can also choose a combination of moderate and vigorous activities—1 minute of vigorous activity can take the place of 2 minutes of moderate activity. For example, 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity, and a combination of 100 minutes of moderate activity plus 25 minutes of vigorous activity count as the same amount. Spreading this activity throughout the week is better than trying to accomplish it all in 1 or 2 days.
- **Children and teens:** Get at least 1 hour of moderate or vigorous activity each day, with vigorous activity on at least 3 days each week.
- Anything is better than nothing! Doing any intentional physical activity above your usual activities can have many health benefits.

Don't Be a Couch Potato

- Spend less time sitting and watching television, playing video games, and engaging in other forms of screen-based entertainment.

It Adds Up

Your daily amount of activity doesn't need to be done all at one time, but is most valuable if done at least 20 minutes at a time.

Have Fun and Be Fit

You can be active by walking briskly, swimming, gardening, doing housework, and even dancing! The more you do, the better. If you have children, be active with them. Table 1 shows some examples of moderate and vigorous activities.

Eat a Variety of Healthy Foods, With an Emphasis on Plant Sources

Choose Foods and Beverages in Amounts That Help You Get to and Stay at a Healthy Weight

- Read those food labels! Be more aware of portion sizes and calories consumed. “Low fat” or “nonfat” does not

continued on next page

TABLE 1. Examples of Moderate and Vigorous Intensity Physical Activities

	MODERATE INTENSITY ACTIVITIES	VIGOROUS INTENSITY ACTIVITIES
Exercise and leisure	Walking, dancing, leisurely bicycling, ice and roller skating, horseback riding, canoeing, yoga	Jogging or running, fast bicycling, circuit weight training, swimming, jumping rope, aerobic dance, martial arts
Sports	Downhill skiing, golfing, volleyball, softball, baseball, badminton, doubles tennis	Cross-country skiing, soccer, field or ice hockey, lacrosse, singles tennis, racquetball, basketball
Home activities	Mowing the lawn, general yard and garden maintenance	Digging, carrying and hauling, masonry, carpentry
Occupational activity	Walking and lifting as part of the job (custodial work, farming, auto or machine repair)	Heavy manual labor (forestry, construction, fire fighting)

always mean “low calorie”; some of these foods have lots of calories from added sugar.

- Don't supersize your plate and yourself! Eat smaller portions of high-calorie foods. Eat vegetables, whole fruit, and other low-calorie foods instead of high-calorie foods such as French fries, potato and other chips, ice cream, doughnuts, and other sweets.
- Limit the number of sugar-sweetened beverages you drink such as soft drinks, sports drinks, and fruit drinks.
- When you eat away from home, choose foods low in calories, fat, and sugar and avoid eating large portions.

Limit the Amount of Processed Meat and Red Meat You Eat

- Lower how much you eat of processed meats such as bacon, sausage, luncheon meats, and hot dogs.
- Choose fish, poultry, or beans instead of red meat (beef, pork, and lamb).
- If you eat red meat, select lean cuts and eat smaller portions.
- Prepare meat, poultry, and fish by baking, broiling, or poaching rather than by frying or charbroiling.

Eat 2½ Cups or More of Vegetables and Fruits Each Day

- Include vegetables and fruits at every meal and eat them for snacks.
- Eat a variety of vegetables and fruits each day.
- Choose whole vegetables and fruits and 100% juice if you drink vegetable or fruit juices.
- Limit use of creamy sauces, dressings, and dips with vegetables and fruits.

Choose Whole Grains Rather Than Refined Grain Products

- Choose whole-grain foods such as whole-grain breads, pasta, and cereals (such as barley and oats) over breads, pasta, and cereals made from refined grains and brown rice over white rice.
- Limit how much you eat of refined carbohydrate foods such as pastries, candy, sweetened breakfast cereals, and other high-sugar foods.

If You Drink Alcoholic Beverages, Limit How Much You Drink

- Drink no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 per day for men.
- A drink is 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.
- Alcohol increases your risk of developing several types of cancer (including breast, mouth, throat, larynx, esophagus, liver, colon, and rectum cancers) and several other health problems.

Help to Create Healthy and Active Communities

Any change you try to make for a healthier lifestyle is easier when you live, work, play, or go to school in a community that supports healthy behaviors. Look for ways to make your community a healthier place to live.

- Ask for healthier meal and snack choices at school or work. Support stores and restaurants that sell or serve healthy options.
- Help make your community an easier place to walk, bike, and enjoy a variety of physical activities. ■