



NUTRI-BYTES

A Cancer Connection: Lifestyle Habits

Are physical activity and nutrition really related to cancer risk?

Daily food and activity habits affect our risk for cancer more than you might think. According to the American Society for Cancer, over ½ million Americans die of cancer each year and one-third of all cancer deaths are related to unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles. Fortunately, these are risk factors that you can control by changing your daily habits.

Tips for lowering your risk of cancer - In addition to quitting smoking, the best ways to reduce your risk of cancer are to maintain a healthy weight, be physically active, and choose healthy foods.

1. Control your weight.

Overweight and obesity increase the risk of several diseases, including cancers of the breast, colon, endometrium, esophagus, and kidney. It seems that excess weight causes the body to produce more estrogen and insulin, which in turn can stimulate cancer growth.

So check your Body Mass Index (BMI) at www.nhlbisupport.com/BMI. If your BMI is above 25, try to achieve a healthier weight by:

- decreasing your caloric intake
 - reduce portion sizes; avoid foods that are high in fat or sugar; drink low-calorie beverages
- increasing your caloric expenditure through physical activity

2. Be physically active.

Engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity on most days. Examples of such activities include brisk walking, biking, and swimming. In addition, try to be active throughout the day by walking, stair climbing, and moving whenever possible.

3. Eat a variety of healthy foods in moderation.

To reduce your risk of cancer, choose foods that are high in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber and low in fat and calories. American Institute for Cancer Research guidelines for a healthy diet include:

- Choose a plant-based diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, & legumes.
- Eat *at least* 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, especially colorful varieties.
- Select foods low in fat, especially saturated fat and trans fat.
- Limit your intake of red meats and processed meats, such as luncheon meat and hot dogs.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
 - *Moderation* means ≤ 1 drink per day for women and ≤ 2 drinks per day for men.

By adopting healthy lifestyle habits, you will reduce your risk of cancer, as well as your risk of heart disease and diabetes. So start with small gradual changes in your daily habits and enjoy a healthy New Year!



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