

Cancer Fighting Foods



Question:

How can I increase the cancer fighting foods in my diet and lose weight at the same time?

Answer:

Many nutrition recommendations for cancer prevention can help with weight control, such as eating more fruits and vegetables, and cutting back on red and processed meats. The American Cancer Society offers practical recommendations on Nutrition and Physical Activity for cancer survivors.

The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) has a dedicated portion of their website that describes many of the potential cancer-fighting foods. They offer this general advice for increasing cancer-fighting foods in the diet:

- Eat a varied diet high in a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans
- Favor brightly colored or strongly flavored vegetables and fruits, which are often the best sources of phytochemicals
- Stick to food sources – phytochemicals in supplement form may not be as easily absorbed as those from food.

What's the proof?

One study of postmenopausal, overweight women found that eating fewer desserts, dining out less, limiting sugar-sweetened beverages, eating fewer fried foods, and eating more fish, each were independently related to six month weight loss. Over the longer-term (48 months), eating more fruits and vegetables and less meat and cheese helped keep extra pounds at bay. Of interest is that each of these factors were independent from the other. That means a person could change just one of these dietary behaviors, likely improving their chances of reaching a healthier weight. Start with one change, and continue to build on it over time, to improve your diet and your health.

A Registered Dietitian (RD) can help you evaluate and prioritize your overall nutritional needs based on your medical history and personal goals. Your dietitian can provide you with individualized recommendations for your unique situation. Some cancer centers have RDs on staff to counsel cancer survivors. Call your cancer center for a recommendation and referral.

If you need to find an RD in private practice, try searching on oncologynutrition.org/search or at eatright.org/programs/rdfinder. Some insurance companies pay for these professional services, but in any case, it is money well invested in your health.

The original question and answer were generously donated by Diana Dyer, MS, RD a cancer survivor, registered dietitian, organic garlic farmer, and the author of "A Dietitian's Cancer Story: Information & Inspiration for Recovery & Healing from a 3-time Cancer Survivor."

Question and Answer on behalf on the ON DPG updated by Jennifer McIver, R.D., April 2013, Kristy Gibbons MS, RD, CSP, CSO, LDN, April 2016

References, Websites, and Resources:

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6. Find a Registered Dietitian. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <http://www.eatright.org/programs/rdfinder/>