

Nutrition and Healthy Living

Keep a Healthy Weight



It's important to maintain a healthy weight. Excess weight puts you at increased risk for cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Research suggests that excess weight may also be associated with an increased risk of cancer recurrence and a decreased survival rate. Even if you don't achieve your "ideal" body weight, a weight loss of 5-10% over six months to a year can reduce your risk for disease.

Eat Plenty of Fruits and Vegetables

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables has many health benefits, including lowering your risk for certain cancers. Plants have natural compounds (such as antioxidants and phytonutrients) that can help improve health and prevent certain diseases. Research also suggests that eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, along with regular exercise, may help lower breast cancer recurrence.

We recommend eating **at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day.**

- **Examples of one serving: 1 cup raw fruits or vegetables, ½ cup cooked fruits or vegetables, ¼ cup dried fruit, ¾ cup fruit juice** (limit to once a day)

Create a Healthy Plate

A well-balanced diet is important. At lunch and dinner, aim for ½-plate of **vegetables**, ¼-plate of **complex carbohydrates** (such as whole grains, bread, cereal, and rice) and ¼-plate **lean protein**.

Protein is an important part of your diet, but **try to limit your intake of red meat and processed meats (such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and lunch meats).** Instead, try healthier proteins, such as fish, poultry, or beans.



Choose Healthy Fats

A diet high in saturated and trans-fats can lead to weight gain and negative health outcomes, which is why it's important to choose healthy fats, such as monounsaturated fats and Omega-3 fats.

Avoid these fats when possible	Choose these healthy fats instead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Saturated fats: animal fat, butter, full-fat dairy, coconut oil, and palm oil ○ Trans-fats: margarine and processed foods that contain hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monounsaturated fats: olive oil, canola oil, olives, avocado, nuts, and nut butters ○ Omega-3 fats: salmon, herring, sardines, mackerel, bluefish, and tuna

Adult Survivorship Program

a member of the LIVESTRONG Survivorship Center of Excellence Network

Limit Your Sugar Intake



Sugar does not feed cancer, but it does lack many nutrients that offer health benefits. It can also promote undesired weight gain and, if eaten in excess, may lead to undesirable changes in insulin production and regulation. Preliminary research suggests that excess insulin can promote tumor cell growth. **Try to limit your intake of sugar-sweetened beverages (such as soda, sports drinks, and fruit drinks) and high-sugar foods (such as pastries, candy, and sugar-sweetened breakfast cereals).**

A Look at Soy

Some evidence suggests that the intake of traditional or **whole soy foods** (such as tofu, edamame, and soy milk) may be linked to lower rates of cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis.

- Although older studies suggested that high levels of soy may trigger growth of ER+ breast cancer cells, **current studies suggest that moderate levels of soy intake appear to be safe for breast cancer survivors.**
- Dana-Farber nutritionists recommend avoiding products with **high levels** of soy, such as **soy isoflavone** used in some supplements, pills, bars, and powders.

Drink Only in Moderation, If at All

Research shows a link between drinking alcohol and the risk of developing some cancers. Minimizing alcohol intake may help lower your risk of developing cancer. We recommend **limiting alcohol intake to one drink or less per day for women and two or fewer drinks per day for men.**

One drink equals:

- 5 ounces of wine
- 12 ounces of beer
- 1.5 ounces of liquor



Organic Foods

There are no epidemiological studies in humans that demonstrate whether organic goods affect cancer incidence, recurrence, or progression. The decision to eat organic foods is a personal choice.

Books and Related Resources

- **Recommended reading:** *Foods that Fight Cancer*, Richard Beliveau, PhD, and Denis Gingras, PhD
- **Recommended reading:** *The Cancer Lifeline Cookbook*, Kimberly Mathai, MS, RD, w/Ginny Smith
- **“Ask the Nutritionist” smartphone app:** Recipes and more. www.dana-farber.org/nutritionapp
- **Nutrition Services at Dana-Farber:** www.dana-farber.org/nutrition

Still have questions?

Dana-Farber’s Registered Dietitians and Licensed Nutritionists provide education programs and individual consultations for patients. For more information, call **617-632-3006**. Find more information online at www.dana-farber.org/nutrition.

This document is for informational purposes only. The content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.