



NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

What you need to know

Taking Control of Your Health

Many things cause cancer - Some are known while others are unknown. Research shows many of the cancer deaths in the United States can be prevented. You can reduce your chances of getting cancer by making changes to your lifestyle.

Smoking, more than anything, increases your chances of getting cancer. A poor diet and lack of exercise also increase your chance of developing the disease. Obesity is linked to some cancers, and it's also related to poor cancer survival rates.

Eat healthfully to reduce your cancer risk

Fruits and vegetables

These foods contain vitamins, fiber and plant chemicals that help protect your body. Listed below are suggested daily recommendations for fruits and vegetables:

- Children ages 2-6 -- One cup of fruit and 1½ cups of vegetables a day.
- Older children, teenage girls and women -- 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables, depending on activity levels.
- Teen boys and men -- 2 cups of fruit and 2½ to 3 cups of vegetables, depending on activity levels.

Fruit and vegetable intake should be varied on a weekly basis to ensure you're benefitting from a wide variety of vitamins, fiber and plant chemicals that help promote a healthy body.

Whole grains

Whole grains contain fiber, vitamins and plant chemicals. Look for labels that say "100 percent whole grain" or "100 percent whole wheat." Don't be misled

by labels that say "wheat bread," "100 percent wheat" or "multi-grain." They may contain little or no whole grain.

Try to have 3-5 servings a day. One serving, for example, is:

- 1 slice of whole wheat bread
- ½ cup cooked or cold cereal, rice or pasta

Choose "healthy" fats

There are "good" fats and "bad" fats. Good fats are mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated fats, consumed in moderation. They are found in foods such as nuts, fish, olive and canola oil. The "bad" fats are saturated and trans fats. Saturated fats come from meat and whole milk dairy products. Trans fats primarily come from commercially-prepared foods that contain hydrogenated oils, including many snack foods, baked goods and fast foods.

Remember, all fats are high in calories. Many foods labeled "low-fat" may be high in sugar calories.

The American Cancer Society recommends reducing the amount of fat and red meat you consume, especially high-fat and processed meats.

Tips to lower fat in your diet:

- Eat more poultry and fish and less red meat.
- Choose low-fat cheeses and milk.
- Use olive or canola oil for cooking and salad dressings.
- Use soft tub margarine labeled "no trans fats."
- Eat more nuts and fewer chips, crackers and cookies.



You should have two to three servings of meat/protein a day. Make sure you are eating the right portions:

- 2-3 ounces cooked meat or fish (about the size of a deck of cards)
- 1/2 cup tofu (soy protein)
- 1 cup cooked dry beans (lentils, navy beans, etc.)
- 1 egg
- 2/3 cup of nuts = 2 ounces meat
- 4 tablespoons peanut butter = 2 ounces meat

Dairy is very important. You need two to three servings a day. This means eating foods like:

- 1 cup of low-fat milk, yogurt, cottage cheese
- 1-1/2 ounces cheese (about the size of 6 dice)

You can still enjoy eating

Good nutrition is important, and you can eat healthfully without giving up your favorite foods. Nutrition experts stress all foods can fit into a healthy diet. Here's how:

- Eat normal serving sizes. Restaurant portions are often over-sized. Take some food home or split it with a dining buddy.
- Eat meats and cheeses, just not as much.
- Eat a variety of foods, choosing more whole grains, fruits and veggies.
- Exercise control. If you want french fries or dessert, have a small portion or share it with a friend. Then balance the rest of your fat intake for the day.

What if you still are diagnosed with cancer?

Even if you eat healthfully, you may still be diagnosed with cancer. Family history, using tobacco products and a host of other factors can increase the chances of getting cancer. A good diet will improve your overall health, and eating healthfully also helps prevent heart disease and diabetes. If you do get cancer, you will be in better shape to fight it.

Why not just take vitamins?

Taking a daily multivitamin may provide added protection against chronic disease. However, vitamins cannot make up for a poor diet.

Physical activity -- A key to preventing cancer

Research shows a link between exercise and a decreased chance of getting some cancers.

- Regular physical activity helps maintain a healthy weight. It also helps food move through the intestines faster, reducing the chances of getting colon and other cancers.

- Regular physical activity helps prevent adult-onset diabetes, which has been linked to increases in colon, pancreatic and other cancers.

Guidelines for exercising

The American Cancer Society recommends the following:

Adults -- Moderate activity for 30-45 minutes or more, five or more days a week. This is equal to walking at a brisk pace of four to five miles an hour. If you haven't been active, gradually work up to this pace and distance.

Children, adolescents and teens -- At least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, at least five days a week.



What you need to know before you start exercising

Check with your health care provider and get proper training. Your health care provider can help you develop an exercise routine that suits your fitness level and lifestyle. For some activities, such as weight lifting or "resistance exercises," proper training is necessary to



get the most benefit and prevent injury.

If you answer "yes" to any of the questions below, talk to your health care provider before starting an exercise regimen. He or she may want you to modify your activity.

- Do you feel pain in your chest when you are physically active?
- Do you have chest pain when you are not active?
- Do you have a bone or joint problem?
- Do you have high blood pressure or a heart condition?
- Are you pregnant?
- Do you take insulin for diabetes?
- Do you smoke?
- Do you have a family history of heart disease?
- Are you older than 69?

How to begin an exercise program

When you decide to change your lifestyle, make changes slowly and increase activity gradually. These are new habits you want to keep for the rest of your life.



Set realistic goals. To start, try walking five minutes a day for two weeks. Your goal should be 30 minutes a day. Remember, you don't need to do the 30 minutes all at once; you can break it up into three 10-minute sessions.

An exercise "buddy" may help you stick to your goals and make the time pass faster. Plus you will motivate each other. Remember to reward yourself when you meet your goals, but don't use food. Try a massage, a new haircut or doing something you enjoy.

Make activity a part of your daily life. Park your car farther from the door when shopping or running errands. Walk downstairs instead of using the elevator; gradually add walking up a few flights. Walk to your co-worker's desk instead of sending an e-mail or calling them. Try exercising in front of the TV during your favorite show.

Choose activities you enjoy. Exercise can be fun. Walking, gardening or dancing for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week is a great exercise. Fit activities that you enjoy into your life. Consider: baseball, basketball, biking, dancing, football, ice skating, roller skating, roller blading, soccer, tennis and walking.

The bottom line

- Follow the recommended guidelines for healthy eating and exercising.
- If you smoke, talk to your health care provider about quitting.
- Talk to your health care provider before starting or increasing physical activity.
- Ask your health care provider about taking vitamins.
- Stay in touch with the latest information on cancer.



*This information is intended to serve as a guideline only. Please consult with a health care provider before making lifestyle changes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to learn more about any of these topics, please visit karmanos.org.

To make an appointment or to reach the Patient & Community Education department call Karmanos at 1-800-527-6266.

Reliable information is also available from the following sources:

American Cancer Society
877-ACS-2345
Cancer.org



National Cancer Institute
800-4-CANCER
Cancer.gov

CANCER INSTITUTE

Wayne State University

