



# 10 Tips for eating healthy during and after cancer treatment

There is not one specific diet that we know lowers the chances of cancer coming back. The best thing you can do is to stay at a healthy weight and eat a healthy variety of foods.



## Tip 1: Try to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables

Go for a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits each day. They have many benefits, such as antioxidants, which can help fight cancer. Consider broccoli, avocado, cantaloupe, and leafy greens.



## Tip 2: Do your best to keep a healthy weight

For some types of cancer, being overweight is linked to a higher chance of cancer coming back, as well as getting a second (different) cancer. And some cancer survivors can be underweight from treatment and may need help gaining or staying at their weight.



## Tip 3: Lower the amount of saturated and trans fats in your diet

Try to replace saturated and trans fat with more “good” fats such as avocados, olive oil, walnuts, and fish. Trans and saturated fats are types of “bad” fats, which can raise blood cholesterol levels and hurt your heart, and contribute to insulin resistance (which causes diabetes).



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Trans fats are often in:

- Margarine
- Baked goods
- Snack foods that contain partially hydrogenated oils



Saturated fats are often in animal products, such as:

- Butter
- Whole milk
- Cheese
- Fatty cuts of meat



Talk to your doctor about your diagnosis and creating your own nutrition plans.



#### Tip 4: Drink lots of water

If you are not getting enough fluids into your body, you can become dehydrated. This can happen if you are losing fluid, such as through throwing up or diarrhea from treatment side effects.

Being dehydrated can cause:

- Feeling really tired (fatigue)
- Feeling dizzy
- Dry mouth
- A bad taste in your mouth
- Nausea



#### Tip 5: Eat high-fiber foods

At this time, we don't know if fiber itself can affect cancer risk or survival. But high-fiber foods are:

- Strongly linked with a lower chance of colorectal cancer
- For breast and prostate cancer survivors, linked with a lower chance of death
- Linked with a lower chance of heart disease

Foods with high fiber include:

- Beans
- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Nuts
- Fruits



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## Tip 6: Follow your doctor's advice on vitamins and supplements

Try to get your nutrients from food, not supplements. Only take dietary supplements when your doctor recommends them.



## Tip 7: Try to lower your amount of alcohol

Many of the medicines that treat cancer are broken down by the liver, so you want your liver working as well as possible. You want to limit or avoid alcohol because:

- Alcohol causes liver swelling and could slow the breakdown of medicines, making side effects worse
- Alcohol, even in the small amounts used in mouthwashes, can irritate or make mouth sores worse
- Alcohol is also linked to certain types of cancer, like mouth, liver, throat, colon, and breast cancer. The more alcohol you drink, the higher your chance of getting these cancers.



## Tip 8: Eat less red and processed meat

Red meat includes beef, lamb, and pork, and processed meat includes bacon, hot dogs, and deli meats. Studies have linked eating large amounts of red meat with a higher chance of colorectal and some other cancers.

Experts recommend avoiding or limiting how much red and processed meat you eat. Try swapping out red meat for healthier options, like fish, chicken, turkey, beans, or low-fat dairy.



## Tip 9: Prepare your food in a variety of ways

How you prepare your food can affect the amount of nutrients you get.

Here are some tips:

- Microwaving and steaming are the best ways to keep the nutrients
- Boiling, especially for a long time, can remove some vitamins
- Juicing can help if you have trouble chewing or swallowing, and may be less filling than whole vegetables and fruits because they have less fiber



## Tip 10: Talk with a dietitian

If you have specific questions, talk with a dietitian. They are experts on food and nutrition! There are even dietitians who specialize in oncology who can help you find the best food choices based on how you feel. They can also answer questions about food, supplements, and nutrients.

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