



What You Should Know About Nutrition and Breast Cancer

There are many nutrition and lifestyle choices women can make everyday to increase their protection from breast cancer.

Healthy Weight Being overweight is a strong risk factor for breast cancer and any weight gain beyond the age of 18, even a 10% weight gain can strongly increase the chances of breast cancer as well as a cancer recurrence. (That's only 15 pounds in a 150 lb woman.) It is important to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight through daily exercise and a low fat plant-based diet. According to the National Cancer Institute, exercising for four or more hours a week may also decrease hormone levels and help lower breast cancer risk.

Eat A Plant Based Diet Plant foods are rich sources of fiber, antioxidants and phytochemicals which have been shown to decrease the risk of cancer and protect the body from other chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Choose whole grains and legumes as well as at least 6-9 servings from a variety of brightly colored fruits and vegetables daily. 1 serving = 1 cup leafy greens, ½ cup raw chopped vegetables, ½ cup fruit (or the size of a tennis ball), 6oz 100% fruit or vegetable juice, ¼ cup dried fruit. (See reverse for sample menu)

Limit Dietary Fats Some studies suggest additional benefit from limiting dietary fats in the diet like butter, full-fat dairy, poultry skin, fatty meats, hydrogenated oils, and some margarines. Instead, include healthful fats like olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds, ground flaxseeds, and fatty fish (like salmon, mackerel, sardines, and arctic char).

Soy Is an excellent source of protein, fiber, B Vitamins, iron, calcium and isoflavones which can possibly help bind estrogen and may decrease the risk of hormone related cancers such as breast and prostate. Soy may also protect bones. *Recent studies including data from the Women's Healthy Eating and Living (WHEL) study have confirmed that soy consumption (up to 3 servings per day) from whole foods such as soy beans, tofu, and soy milk for any breast cancer type is probably safe. Concerns about soy and breast cancer stemmed from animal studies in which high dose isoflavone levels were used. Soy supplements and concentrates such as soy protein powder, soy protein isolates, genistein & daidzein should be avoided until more is known.

Green Tea This beverage has strong anticancer properties from catechins, a flavonoid. Aim for 1-4 cups daily.

Alcohol Is a strong risk factor for many cancers, including breast cancer. Despite the benefits of resveratrol, a phytochemical in red wine and grapes, experts recommend avoiding alcohol as there appears to be no safe level for prevention of cancer. As a survivor, it is recommended to limit your alcohol to no more than 2 servings per week (if at all). One serving of alcohol is defined as: 5oz glass of red wine, 12oz of beer, 1 ½ oz of liquor.

Bone Health & Vitamin D It's important for women of all ages to consume adequate amounts of calcium and Vitamin D to maintain bone health and this may be even more crucial for postmenopausal women due to their increased risk of osteoporosis. Vitamin D has promising health benefits alone. Healthy levels of these nutrients can be achieved by consuming low-fat dairy products, fortified soymilk, oily fish (3.5 oz salmon can contain 300-500 IU Vitamin D alone!), eggs and receiving 10-15 minutes of direct sunlight daily in addition to a calcium supplement of 1000-1200mg (broken into 2 doses) with up to 2,000 IU's total of Vitamin D₃ daily. Take these

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together at your largest meals for increased absorption. Because Vitamin D deficiency is common and may increase the risk of cancer you may want to ask your doctor to check your blood level where 35-40 ng/mL is considered an optimal level.

Sugar & Cancer Limit concentrated sweets, added sugar from processed foods, and sugary beverages as these foods provide calories, but few nutrients. A high intake of sugar can increase insulin levels as well as encourage weight gain, both possibly leading to cancer. Natural sugars found in fruit, vegetables, beans, whole grains, dairy and soymilk are the best sources of carbohydrates to fuel your body and should not be restricted unless specifically recommended by your healthcare team.



Sample Menu—Bon Appétit!

Consume 30-45 grams of fiber daily!

Breakfast: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup high fiber cereal such as Kashi 'Heart to Heart' or Kellogg's All Bran Cereal with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blueberries, 2 Tbsp slivered almonds, 1 Tbsp ground flaxseed with 1 cup plain soymilk or organic fat-free milk.

Snack: 1 cup sliced raw veggies (carrots, celery, jicama, bell peppers, cucumbers) with 2 Wasa Crackers or 6 small whole grain crackers and 2 Tbsp hummus dip.

Lunch: 3oz shredded chicken breast with 1 tsp Dijon, 1 Tbsp plain low-fat yogurt, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp dill for an open faced sandwich on 1 slice of whole grain bread. Pair with sliced apple and a small dark leafy green side salad with 1 Tbsp vinaigrette.

Snack: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup non-fat cottage cheese or 8oz non-fat plain Greek yogurt with 1 Tbsp chopped walnuts. Try adding cinnamon and vanilla extract for sweet or scallions and a dab of horseradish for a savory kick!

Dinner: 4oz broiled wild salmon with garlic, parsley, lemon juice, olive oil and a dash of sea salt and pepper. $\frac{1}{2}$ cup quinoa made with low sodium vegetable or chicken stock and add 1 Tbsp pumpkin seeds and 1 Tbsp unsweetened dried cranberries or cherries. 1 cup grilled vegetables (broccoli, asparagus, onions, carrots)

Dessert: Enjoy 1 oz 60% cacao dark chocolate and 1 cup of green tea for an after dinner treat.

(Total ~1700 calories and 8 servings of fruit, vegetables, legumes/beans)

