



THE ROLE OF NUTRITION IN BREAST CANCER PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

October is breast cancer awareness month, which is a time to raise awareness and highlight the importance of prevention and wellness. While no single food can guarantee prevention, a healthy and nutrient-dense diet can support the body's natural immune defenses, reduce overall inflammation, and promote a healthful recovery for those undergoing treatment.

LIMITING PROCESSED FOODS AND SUGAR

Highly processed and sugary food and beverages should be avoided when it comes to the prevention of breast cancer. These foods and beverages can contribute to factors that can lead to the development of breast cancer, such as excess weight gain and chronic inflammation. Here are some tips to avoid processed foods and sugary beverages:

- Start by switching to whole grain products instead of products containing white flour
- Swap sugary beverages for infused water and unsweetened teas
- Reduce your intake of packaged snacks and choose more whole foods

INCORPORATE MORE PLANT FOODS DAILY

A daily diet rich in plant foods can contribute to the prevention of breast cancer. Try incorporating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts into your daily diet. Plant foods offer essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, and phytochemicals that reduce the risks of developing cancer. Here are some tips to incorporate more plant foods daily:

- Add vegetables to every meal
- Switch to whole grains
- Incorporate more plant proteins such as peas, beans, and nuts
- Use vegetable as noodles or wraps (lettuce wraps, spaghetti squash, zucchini noodles)





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Choosing the right fats to consume is important for breast cancer prevention. Healthy fats can help to lower inflammation while unhealthy fats can actually be the cause of it. Healthy fat options can also help to protect your body's cells, support hormone regulation, and keep your heart strong. Here are some examples of healthy fat sources you can incorporate into your daily diet:

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

- Salmon
- Sardines
- Chia Seeds
- Walnuts
- Flaxseeds

MONOUNSATURATED FATS:

- Avocados
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Almonds
- Peanuts

FATS TO AVOID:

- Trans Fats
- Excess Saturated Fat

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Maintaining a healthy body weight, especially after menopause, is an important step in reducing your risks for breast cancer. Being at an unhealthy weight for your body composition is linked to higher risk of developing hormone-receptor-positive breast cancer in postmenopausal women. This is because excess body fat can lead to higher levels of estrogen and inflammation, which both can promote the development of breast cancer. Tips to maintain a healthy body weight:

- Prioritize daily movement
- Meet with a personal trainer to develop a workout routine
- Focus on a healthful diet and meet with a Registered Dietitian for further guidance
- Track progress in a food and activity journal





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SUPPORT DURING TREATMENT

For individuals going through breast cancer treatments, nutrition can play a key role in supporting strength, managing side effects, and promoting healing. Many treatment options can have a heavy toll in the body, but by making intentional food choices it can help to improve energy levels and immune functions. When undergoing treatment it is highly recommended to meet with a Registered Dietitian in order to receive proper dietary guidance. Here are some foods and tips that can help with a recovery journey:

- Protein Rich foods: aid in the repairing of cells and preserving muscle
- Have Small and Frequent Meals: treatment can often lessen one's appetite, so small and frequent meals might be a better option to ensure that food is still properly being consumed
- Hydrate!!!
- Choose Easy-to-Digest Foods: toast, rice, bananas, oatmeal

