

FOODS FOR SURVIVING BREAST CANCER

Want to seize your chance to lower your risk not just of breast cancer but of all types of cancer?

The data published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* from the Iowa Women's Health Study, in which 29,564 women were followed for 13 years, shows that those whose diet and lifestyle practices met American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) guidelines had the lowest risk for all forms of cancer.

The AICR's 9 recommendations are:

- Eat five or more servings of vegetables and fruits each day.
- Eat 7 or more portions of complex carbohydrates such as whole grains and legumes each day, and restrict intake of processed foods and refined sugars.
- Limit red meat to no more than 3 ounces daily.
- Limit intake of fatty foods, particularly of animal origin.
- Limit intake of salted foods and use of salt in cooking.
- Limit alcoholic drinks to one (women) or two (men) daily.
- Keep BMI (body mass index) under 25 and limit adult weight gain to no more than 11 pounds.
- Engage in daily moderate and weekly vigorous physical activity.
- Do not smoke.

Dietary guidelines for breast health:

- Eat fresh and organic foods whenever possible
- If you eat meat, focus on fish and organic game and poultry rather than red meats
- Do eat fish, especially cold-water fish
- Enjoy at least 6 eggs each week
- Eat whole-grain rice, pastas, cereals, breads, and crackers
- Enjoy dark berries, especially cranberries, and naturally sweetened dark berry juices
- Eat legumes regularly, especially soyfoods
- Eat whole, unroasted nuts and seeds regularly, especially flaxseed
- Limit your intake of dairy foods
- Eat fresh vegetables every day
- Eat at least one serving of mustard family vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, kale, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts) daily
- Explore the world of sea vegetables. It's a great time to become friends with sushi!
- Have fresh fruit for dessert
- Use olive oil instead of butter, margarine, or vegetable oils (olive oil consumption significantly lowers breast cancer risk)
- Use spices every day, especially rosemary, ginger, turmeric, horseradish, basil, sage, thyme, oregano, saffron, paprika, and curry spice (these spices and others from their families seem to facilitate the metabolism of estrogen-like substances)
- Eat garlic and onions regularly
- Enjoy no more than one glass of wine daily, and preferably red wine

Eat more

- Cold water fish such as salmon, tuna, herring, mackerel and halibut for their beneficial omega 3 fatty acids
- Eggs
- Olive oil
- Turmeric
- Garlic
- Soy foods
- Flaxseeds
- Legumes
- Whole grains
- Sea vegetables
- Organically grown Brassica vegetables including cabbage ,broccoli, kale, mustard greens and Brussels sprouts
- Fresh fruit especially cranberries and and citrus
- Apples

Dietary factors associated with a lower risk include:

- Fish, especially those rich in omega-3 fatty acids
- Eggs
- Fruits, especially citrus fruits and cranberries
- Olive oil
- Whole grains
- Soy and other legumes
- Cabbage
- Vegetables
- Fruits

Phytoestrogens-Soyfoods, Flaxseeds, and More

Phytoestrogens are naturally occurring food nutrients that seem to mitigate some of the effects of estrogen-like substances on hormone-sensitive areas of the body (such as the breasts). Food phytoestrogens include:

- Isoflavones (like genistein and daidzein), which come from soy, beans, peas, clover, licorice root, alfalfa, and kudzu
- Lignans, which come from flaxseed, rye, wheat, and sea vegetables
- Some types of [flavonoids](#) (like rutin, quercetin, and resveratrol), which are especially plentiful in citrus fruits, grapes, black and green teas, nut skins, and onions

Special note on Flaxseeds

- Besides providing high levels of essential fats, [flaxseeds](#) are also among the most abundant sources of lignans. These are specialized fibers that may help block the cancer-promoting effects of estrogens on breasts. And, like fiber, they also promote the formation of SHBG and keep estrogen-like substances in a less active form in the blood and help the body excrete metabolized estrogens.

Brassica Family Vegetables

The members of the Brassica family vegetables (including broccoli, kale, cauliflower, cabbage, mustard, horseradish, Brussels sprouts, and broccoli sprouts) provide unique nutrients that support your body's production of "good" estrogens while decreasing the "bad" ones.

These fabulous vegetables also potently stimulate the detoxification systems of the body and act as antioxidants. It is necessary to eat significant amounts of mustard family vegetables to get all of these benefits. Fortunately, broccoli sprouts are particularly rich in these nutrients, containing 40 times as much as mature broccoli!

This significant protective effect is not all that surprising considering that the isothiocyanates provided by Brassica vegetables, such as cabbage, are capable of numerous breast cancer-inhibiting actions including:

- inducing the production of Phase II enzymes in the liver, which bind to potential carcinogens and remove them from the body
- inducing apoptosis, the self-destruct sequence the body uses to eliminate old or cancerous cells
- beneficially affecting the way in which steroid hormones, including estrogen, are metabolized and the way in which the estrogen receptors on cells respond to the hormone
- and preventing excessive cellular proliferation.

Another beneficial compound in Brassica vegetables, called sulforaphane, which is formed when these vegetables are chopped or chewed, is also known to trigger the liver to produce enzymes that detoxify cancer-causing chemicals, inhibit chemically-induced breast cancers in animal studies, and induce colon cancer cells to commit suicide.

Avoid well done meat, polyunsaturated fats, caffeine-containing foods and beverages and alcohol.

The contents of your diet can exert profound daily effects on the way your body absorbs, responds to, transforms, recycles, and excretes estrogen-like substances.

In recent population studies, investigators have explored diets from around the world to determine the components that most affect breast cancer risk. Dietary factors associated with a higher risk include:

- Animal products
- Meat
- Total fat
- Saturated fat
- Dairy
- Refined sugar
- Total calories
- Alcohol

Non-organic foods

Another very controversial topic! There is increasing concern over the use of certain agricultural chemicals, including:

- Hormones that encourage livestock growth but may leave residues in animal flesh
- Pesticides and herbicides, some of which act as "environmental estrogens"
- Fertilizers that may contain high levels of heavy metals
- Antibiotics that may leave residues in animal flesh

Well-done meats

Studies have shown that the consumption of well-done meats (such as burgers, steak, bacon) may increase risk of developing breast cancer by almost 5 times.

Coffee, tea, and chocolate

These enjoyable and addictive substances have unfortunate effects on estrogen metabolism. The stimulants in these foods compete with estrogen for removal from the body; the more coffee, tea, or chocolate you consume, the harder it is for your body to excrete estrogens!

Reference website: <http://whfoods.org/genpage.php?tname=disease&dbid=16#nutrientneeds>