

# Best Cancer Fighting Foods

## Fighting Cancer by the Plateful

No single food can reduce your risk of cancer, but the right combination of foods may help make a difference. At mealtimes, strike a balance of at least 2/3 plant-based foods and no more than 1/3 animal protein. This "New American Plate" is an important cancer fighting tool, according to the American Institute for Cancer Research.

## Fighting Cancer With Color

Fruits and vegetables are rich in cancer-fighting nutrients - and the more color, the more nutrients they contain. These foods can help lower your risk in a second way, too, when they help you reach and maintain a healthy body weight. Carrying extra pounds increases the risk for multiple cancers, including colon, esophagus, and kidney cancers. Aim for at least five servings a day, prepared in a healthy way.



## The Cancer-Fighting Breakfast

Folate is an important B vitamin that may help protect against cancers of the colon, rectum, and breast. You can find it in abundance on the breakfast table. Fortified breakfast cereals and whole wheat products are good sources of folate. So are orange juice, melons, and strawberries.

## More Folate-Rich Foods

Other good sources of folate are asparagus and eggs. You can also find it in chicken liver, beans, sunflower seeds, and leafy green vegetables like spinach or romaine lettuce. According to the ACS, the best way to get folate is not from a pill, but by eating enough fruits, vegetables, and enriched grain products.

## Pass Up the Deli Counter

An occasional Reuben sandwich or hot dog at the ballpark probably isn't going to hurt you. But cutting back on processed meats like bologna, ham, and hot dogs may help lower your risk of colorectal and stomach cancers. Also, eating meats that have been preserved by smoking or with salt raises your exposure to agents that can potentially cause cancer.

## Cancer-Fighting Tomatoes

Whether it's the lycopene -- the pigment that gives tomatoes their red color -- or something else isn't clear. But some studies have linked eating tomatoes to reduced risk of several types of cancer, including prostate cancer. Studies also suggest that processed tomato products such as juice, sauce, or paste increase the cancer-fighting potential.



## Tea's Anticancer Potential

Even though the evidence is still spotty, tea, especially green tea, may be a strong cancer fighter. In laboratory studies, green tea has slowed or prevented the development of cancer in colon, liver, breast, and prostate cells. It also had a similar effect in lung tissue and skin. And in some longer term studies, tea was associated with lower risks for bladder, stomach, and pancreatic cancers.

## Grapes and Cancer

Grapes and grape juice, especially purple and red grapes, contain resveratrol. Resveratrol has strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. In laboratory studies, it has prevented the kind of

damage that can trigger the cancer process in cells. There is not enough evidence to say that eating grapes or drinking grape juice or wine can prevent or treat cancer.

### **Limit Alcohol to Lower Cancer Risk**

Cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, esophagus, liver, and breast are all linked with drinking alcohol. Alcohol may also raise the risk for cancer of the colon and rectum. The American Cancer Society says that even the suggested daily limit of 2 drinks for men and 1 for women elevates the risk. Women at higher risk for breast cancer may want to talk with a doctor about what amount of alcohol, if any, is safe based on their personal risk factors.

### **Water and Other Fluids Can Protect**

Water not only quenches your thirst, but it may protect you against bladder cancer. The lower risk comes from water diluting concentrations of potential cancer-causing agents in the bladder. Also, drinking more fluids causes you to urinate more frequently. That lessens the amount of time those agents stay in contact with the bladder lining.

### **The Mighty Bean**

Beans are so good for you, it's no surprise they may help fight cancer, too. They contain several potent phytochemicals that may protect the body's cells against damage that can lead to cancer. In the lab these substances slowed tumor growth and prevented tumors from releasing substances that damage nearby cells.

### **The Cabbage Family vs. Cancer**

Cruciferous vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, and kale. These members of the cabbage family make an excellent stir fry and can really liven up a salad. But most importantly, components in these vegetables may help your body defend against cancers such as colon, breast, lung, and cervix.



### **Dark Green Leafy Vegetables**

Dark green leafy vegetables such as mustard greens, lettuce, kale, chicory, spinach, and chard have an abundance of fiber, folate, and carotenoids. These nutrients may help protect against cancer of the mouth, larynx, pancreas, lung, skin, and stomach.

### **Protection From an Exotic Spice**

Curcumin is the main ingredient in the Indian spice turmeric and a potential cancer fighter. Lab studies show it can suppress the transformation, proliferation, and invasion of cancerous cells for a wide array of cancers.

### **Cooking Methods Matter**

How you cook meat can make a difference in how big a cancer risk it poses. Frying, grilling, and broiling meats at very high temperatures causes chemicals to form that may increase cancer risk. Other cooking methods such as stewing, braising, or steaming appear to produce fewer of those chemicals. And when you do stew the meat, remember to add plenty of healthy, protective vegetables.

### **A Berry Medley With a Punch**

Strawberries and raspberries have a phytochemical called ellagic acid. This powerful antioxidant may actually fight cancer in several ways at once, including deactivating certain cancer causing substances and slowing the growth of cancer cells.

## **Blueberries for Health**

The potent antioxidants in blueberries may have wide value in supporting our health, starting with cancer. Antioxidants fight cancer by ridding the body of free radicals before they can do their damage to cells. Try topping oatmeal, cold cereal, yogurt, even salad with blueberries to boost your intake of these healthful berries.



## **Pass on the Sugar**

Sugar may not cause cancer directly. But it may displace other nutrient-rich foods that help protect against cancer. And it increases calorie counts, which contributes to overweight and obesity. Excess weight can be a cancer risk. Fruit offers a sweet alternative in a vitamin-rich package.

## **Don't Rely on Supplements**

Vitamins may help protect against cancer. But that's when you get them naturally from food. Both the American Cancer Society and the American Institute for Cancer Research emphasize that getting cancer-fighting nutrients from foods like nuts, fruits, and green leafy vegetables is vastly superior to getting them from supplements. Eating a healthy diet is best.

**Source:** WebMD.com