



# Diet and Physical Activity Cancer Fact Sheet

Getting to and staying at a healthy weight, following a healthy eating pattern, avoiding alcohol, and moving more can help reduce your risk of cancer.

## Cancers affected

- **Being overweight or obese** may increase the risk of some cancers, including esophageal, breast, colon and rectum, endometrial, kidney, liver, pancreas, stomach, brain, gallbladder, ovary, prostate, thyroid cancer, multiple myeloma, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.
- **Not having a healthy eating pattern** may increase the risk of cancer. Having a diet high in red and processed meat, starchy foods, refined carbohydrates, and sugary drinks is linked to a higher risk of some cancers. Diets that include colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and fish or poultry and fewer red and processed meats are linked to lower risk of some cancers.
- **Drinking alcohol** can increase the risk for cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, esophagus, liver, colon and rectum, female breast, and stomach. The more alcohol a person drinks, the higher their cancer risk.
- **Getting regular physical activity** helps decrease the risk of colon, female breast, endometrial, kidney, bladder, esophageal, and stomach cancers.

## American Cancer Society Guidelines on Diet and Physical Activity for Cancer Prevention

Get to and stay at a healthy weight during your life.

- Keep body weight within the healthy range.
- If you are overweight or obese, losing even a few pounds can lower your risk for some types of cancer (and other serious health problems).

- The best way to get to and stay at a healthy weight is to combine a healthy diet with plenty of physical activity. Eating well and moving more can improve your health, help you feel better, and help protect you against cancer.

## The Right Weight for You

Try to get to a healthy weight by learning about your body mass index (BMI). Knowing your BMI can tell you if your weight is healthy for someone of your height. You can find your BMI by using a simple chart such as the one online at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) (search for “BMI calculator”) or by asking your doctor.

## Move More and Sit Less.

### Move More.

Adults:

- Get at least 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week. More activity is even better, and 300 or more minutes of moderate activity (or 150 or more minutes of vigorous activity) is best. You can also choose to combine moderate and vigorous activities where one minute of vigorous activity takes the place of two minutes of moderate activity. For example, 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity, and a combination of 100 minutes of moderate activity plus 25 minutes of vigorous activity all count the same.

- Examples of moderate-intensity activities: walking, dancing, mowing the lawn, volleyball, or leisurely bicycling.
- Examples of vigorous -intensity activities: jogging or running, fast bicycling, swimming, jumping rope, martial arts, or basketball.

Children and teens:

- Get at least 1 hour of moderate or vigorous activity each day.

### Sit Less.

- Avoid long periods of sitting or lying down. Spend less time sitting or lying down while watching TV, using your cell phone, playing computer or video games, or using other screen-based entertainment.

### Have Fun and Be Fit.

- You can be active by walking, swimming, gardening, doing housework, or even dancing. Walking or biking instead of driving is a good idea if you can do it and also counts as physical activity.
- If you have children, grandchildren, or pets, playing with them and going on walks are fun ways to stay active.

## Follow a healthy eating pattern with a focus on plant sources.

### A healthy eating pattern means eating:

- Foods high in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients
- Foods that are not high in calories
- A colorful variety of vegetables – dark green, red, and orange
- Fiber-rich beans and peas
- A colorful variety of fruits
- Whole grains (in bread, pasta, etc.) and brown rice

### A healthy eating pattern means limiting or not including:

- Red meats like beef, pork, and lamb

- Processed meats like bacon, sausage, luncheon meats, and hot dogs
- Sugary drinks, including soft drinks, sports drinks, and fruit drinks
- Highly processed foods and refined grain products

### Tips for a healthy eating pattern

- Fill most of your plate with colorful vegetables and fruits, beans, and whole grains.
- Choose fish, poultry, or beans as your main sources of protein instead of red meat or processed meats.
- If you eat red or processed meats, eat smaller portions.

### More healthy eating tips

- Prepare meat, poultry, and fish by baking, broiling, or poaching rather than by frying or charbroiling.
- Make healthy choices when you eat away from home. Include vegetables, whole fruit, and other low-calorie foods instead of high-calorie foods such as french fries, potato and other chips, ice cream, doughnuts, and other sweets. Restaurants often serve big portions, but you don't have to eat it all at one time. Ask for a to-go box and pack up your leftovers for lunch or dinner the next day.
- Don't supersize your plate – and yourself! If you enjoy high-calorie foods once in a while, eat smaller portions.
- Pay attention to food labels in the grocery store and ingredients listed on restaurant menus.
- Limit your use of creamy sauces, dressings, and dips with vegetables and fruits.

## It is best not to drink alcohol.

- If you do drink alcohol, have no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 drinks per day for men.
- One drink is 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.
- All types of drinks with alcohol increase your risk of cancer and other health problems. It doesn't matter whether you choose beer, white or red wine, or mixed drinks.



[cancer.org](https://cancer.org) | 1.800.227.2345

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