Printed April 27, 2015 from http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/prevention-and-healthy-living/diet-and-nutrition/general-nutrition-recommendations

General Nutrition Recommendations [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 03/2014

Key Messages:

- Balancing calories with physical activity and making informed food choices can help you reach and stay at a healthy weight, lower your risk of chronic (long-lasting) disease, including some cancers, and improve your overall health.
- Talk with your doctor about ways you can start or continue eating healthy and find a physical activity plan that is right for you.

The following dietary recommendations are based on guidelines [3] published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for people 2 years and older, including those at increased risk of chronic disease.

Balance Your Calories

Adults and children who are overweight or obese, meaning extremely overweight, have an increased risk of health problems. Obesity increases a person's risk for heart disease, type II diabetes, and several cancers. Whether you are at your ideal weight or you need to lose weight, the key to weight management is balancing your calories, which is a measure for the amount of energy you get from a food or drink. That means being aware of how many calories you take in, and how many calories you use in physical activity.

The following tips can help you manage your body weight.

Enjoy your food, but eat less. Pay attention to how much you are eating and drinking, and choose smaller portions or lower-calorie options. Avoid oversized portions, particularly when eating out. Sharing meals with another person when eating out can help reduce portion size.

Understand your calorie needs. How many calories a person needs each day depends on a number of factors, including age, gender, current weight, height, and activity level. Talk with your doctor or food and nutrition professional, called a registered dietitian/nutritionist (RDN) about your ideal weight and how many calories you should take in each day.

Understand sources of calories. Different foods and drinks contain different amounts of

calories. Understanding which ones to limit, such as sugar-sweetened drinks, and which ones can help you control your weight, such as whole grains, vegetables, and fruits, is important. Read food labels to learn more about the calories in the foods you eat.

Be physically active. Most people should aim for 30 to 60 minutes of moderate-to-intense physical activity on most days. However, even a small increase in physical activity [4] has benefits. Limit behaviors where you are not moving, called sedentary behaviors, such as watching television or sitting at a computer.

Foods to increase

It is important to increase your consumption of the following nutrient-dense foods, which provide vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other substances your body needs.

Fruits and vegetables. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Eat a variety of vegetables, especially dark-green, red, and orange vegetables, and beans and peas. Some fruits and vegetables may help protect against certain types of cancer. Plus, without added fats or sugars, fruits and vegetables are relatively low in calories. Eating them instead of higher calorie foods can help with weight management.

Fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk and milk products. Milk and milk products, such as cheese and yogurt, provide calcium, potassium, and other important nutrients to your diet**.** Fat-free or low-fat products offer the same nutrients as versions that contain higher amounts of fat with fewer calories.

Whole grains. Half of your daily grains should be whole grains, an important source of iron, magnesium, selenium, B vitamins, and dietary fiber. Replace refined grains, which include white flour, white bread, and white rice, with whole grains. Look for ?100% whole grain? or ?100% whole wheat? as the first or second ingredient in food labels.

Lean proteins, with an emphasis on seafood. Eat a variety of protein foods that are low in fat or have good fats. Smart choices include seafood, lean meat and poultry, greek-style yogurts, eggs, beans, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds. Seafood provides a range of nutrients that may prevent heart disease, so it is recommended that adults eat eight or more ounces per week. Limit red meat to about 18 ounces per week and avoid consuming processed meats, such as salami and other lunch meats, and hot dogs, which have been shown to raise cancer risk.

Foods and drinks to reduce

Some foods and drinks, and specific substances in them, can increase the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases when you eat too much of them. They can also replace nutrient-dense forms of foods in the diet, making it difficult to get the recommended nutrients and control calories.

Sodium (salt). Sodium is an essential nutrient, but too much can be harmful**.** Adults should limit daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. People who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should limit daily sodium intake to 1,500 mg.

Added sugars. Sugar that does not occur naturally in a food or drink and that is added during process, preparation, or at the table, is called added sugar. Reducing added sugars will lower the calorie content of your diet. For example, replace sweetened drinks with water.

Solid fats. Small amounts of fat are necessary in your diet, but certain types of fats should be eaten as little possible because they are linked to chronic disease. Solid fats, such as butter, shortening, and lard, are major sources of saturated and *trans* fatty acids. Replace these fats with vegetable or nut oils that are rich in monounsaturated and polyun-saturated fatty acids. Foods often high in solid fats include processed foods and baked goods, such as cakes and cookies, whole milk, and regular (not lean) ground beef.

Alcohol. Drinking too much alcohol [5] increases the risk of certain diseases, including several cancers. Women should have no more than one drink per day, and probably no more than three to four a week to reduce breast cancer risk. Men should have no more than two drinks per day. Also, pay attention to serving size. One serving of alcohol is 12 ounces (oz) of beer, 5 oz of wine, and 1.5 oz of 80-proof distilled spirits, such as gin, whiskey, or vodka.

More Information

The Role Major Nutrients for Cancer Prevention [6]

Plant-Based Foods [7]

Vitamins and Minerals [8]

Grocery Shopping Made Easier [9]

Additional Resources

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics [10]

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Fruits & Veggies Matter [11] and Nutrition for Everyone [12]

Fruits and Veggies - More Matters [13]

USDA: Choose My Plate [14]

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/prevention-and-healthy-living/diet-and-nutrition/general-nutrition-recommendations
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us
[3] http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2010.asp

[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/24967
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/24981
[6] http://www.cancer.net/node/24983
[7] http://www.cancer.net/node/24986
[8] http://www.cancer.net/node/24987
[9] http://www.cancer.net/node/24550
[10] http://www.eatright.org/
[11] http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/index.html
[12] http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/index.html
[13] http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/
[14] http://www.choosemyplate.gov/