

# EATING RIGHT THROUGH CANCER

## Cancer side effects and the role of food

### PROBLEM



Loss of appetite

Changes in sense of taste or smell

Constipation

Diarrhea

Dry mouth

Nausea & vomiting

Sore mouth, sore throat  
& trouble swallowing

Weight gain or weight loss

### SOLUTION



Consume small meals

Have cold food to suppress taste & smell

Have fibre-rich food

Fibre rich diet, include whole grains and  
nuts, avoid spicy, oily food

Increase fluid intake

Avoid greasy food, consume bland food,  
consume small frequent meals

Avoid hot, spicy, salty, citrus-based, and high-sugar  
foods, avoid tobacco and alcohol, gargle with saltwater

Balanced diet/High calorie, high protein diet

## Foods to be Avoided

**Processed meat or red meat:** Contains chemicals called *haem* and *N-nitroso* which can lead to cancer.

**Sugary drinks or non-diet soda:** *Pesticides* and artificial sweeteners such as *aspartame* might play a role in cancer formation.



**Fast food & processed food:** Processing food creates cancerous compounds, such as *acrylamide* and *polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons*.

**Alcohol:** Ethanol breaks down into *acetaldehyde*, which is a toxic chemical and a carcinogen; *acetaldehyde* can damage DNA & proteins.



## Foods to Start Eating

**Cruciferous vegetables**  
Cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli contain *Glucosinolates*, which is a cancer-fighting compound.



**Flax seeds, sesame seeds, soybeans:** *Lignin*, found in these foods reduces the abnormal cell division which causes cancer.



**Lettuce & spinach-** contains *beta-carotene*, *lutein* and *zeaxanthin*. These are antioxidants which blocks early stages in the development of cancer.



**Red fruits & vegetables (Tomatoes, watermelon, papaya, guava):** These contain *lycopene*, an antioxidant that reduces the spread of localized cancer.



# Immunity Boosting Foods



**Protein** found in seafood, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, lean meat and beans.



**Vitamin A**, found in green- or orange-coloured fruits and vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, carrots, palak and apricots.



**Vitamin C**, found in citric fruits (orange & lemon) helps in protecting cells and in keeping them healthy.



**Zinc**, found in lean meats, poultry, seafood, seeds and nuts.



Spices such as turmeric, garlic, black pepper, ginger are high in **antioxidants** and **phytochemicals**. They help in fighting infections efficiently



## Liquid Foods:

Patient may struggle to eat solid meals due to swallowing problems or appetite loss. This leads to nutritional deficiency.

**Liquid foods** can help you nourish in these cases

- **Clear liquids** are easy to see through and to pour.
- Ideal only for short durations to help control symptoms of treatment.
- E.g. Fruit juices without milk, Strained lemonade / nimbu pani, herbal tea, water

- **Full liquids** have more calories, protein, nutrients so they can help meet daily nutrition requirements.
- These are easy to pour and can be sucked through a straw.
- Ex: Smoothies, soups, milkshakes, vegetable puree



## Ways to Eat

Plan before beginning your treatment. It's a good idea to get good nutrition now. Plan for days where won't feel like cooking. Fill your fridge with healthy foods.

Eat when you're hungry. Drink meal replacements if your appetite fades. If meals are a struggle, eat small ones instead of big ones.  
Eat home cooked.

Eat at least 2-3 cups of fruits and vegetables a day. Just be sure to wash them thoroughly.  
Stay hydrated. Have fresh juices.



## How to cook your food

Don't eat raw or undercooked meat, fish, and poultry. Don't eat foods or drink beverages that are not boiled.



Do not cross-contaminate: Use a clean knife to cut different foods. Use separate plates for cooked and uncooked food



Clean all the vegetables, fruits, and meat separately.  
Eat fruits without peel.



## Food FAQs

### Does High Sugar Intake Increase My Risk of Cancer?

Sugar intake isn't directly linked to increased cancer risk. However, sugary foods contain less nutrients than fresh natural foods.

### Do I need to take supplements?

A supplement can be vitamins, minerals, herbs, or a combination of these in a powder or liquid form. Supplements are not meant to take the place of food but should be taken in addition to food. Consult your healthcare team before taking anything other than prescribed medications and chemotherapy.

### Is Ayurveda & Naturotherapy helpful for cancer patients?

Researchers have found that some Ayurvedic treatments can help relieve cancer symptoms. It can also improve quality of life. Consult your oncologist before starting these.