

Nutrition and Cancer: Prevention, Treatment and Recovery



By Latinas Contra Cancer

Prevention

We read several research studies on foods that have been directly shown to increase cancer risk, and the following are the ones that were mentioned the most. Note that these are the foods that health officials suggest not eating.

- These foods **do not** directly **cause** cancer. Scientific studies found that people who ate a lot of these foods were also at high risk for cancers. That does not mean that these foods directly caused cancer. This means that there is a correlation between a high consumption of these foods and a higher risk of cancer. One possible explanation is that people who eat a lot of these foods end up with chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes, and maybe these diseases are the ones that cause cancer.

Foods	Why?
# 1: Red meat (any meat that is not poultry or seafood) and processed meats (hams, sausages, etc)	When red meat is cooked at high temperatures or on charcoal, carcinogenic molecules are produced. Processed meats are treated with nitrates, which cause carcinogenic molecules to be produced.
Alcohol	Increases the risk of many cancers, including of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, breast, etc.
Saturated fats	Increases the risk of breast cancer and gastrointestinal cancers
High levels of dairy	Increases the presence of a growth factor, which causes cells to grow when they shouldn't
Added sugars and sweetened beverages	It increases the risk of gastrointestinal cancers, including pancreatic cancers.
Refined grains	Increases the risk of gastrointestinal cancers

- Common treatment side effects are anorexia, early satiety, changes in taste and smell, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, changes in bowel habits, weight changes, loss of muscle mass, pain and fatigue
- The symptoms will be different according to each person and according to the type of cancer
 - For example, it is more common to gain weight if you have breast cancer than if you have gastric cancer.

Recommendations:

- You will need a lot more protein and carbohydrates to maintain your weight and help your body heal.
- Avoid foods that increase cancer risk as much as possible.
- Follow the normal nutrition recommendations that we have explained in other brochures.
- Try foods you don't normally eat since your taste and smell will change.
- Target your diet to your symptoms. For example, if your symptoms are a sore throat, avoid dry foods.
- Exercising is safe during treatment; exercise helps improve mood!
- The symptoms that you will feel during your treatment will be different from those of other people. Don't be afraid to ask your medical team if your insurance covers a visit to a nutritionist and personal trainer to develop a meal and exercise plan that addresses your symptoms.

Foods that increase the risk of cancer are the ones we eat most: fruits, vegetables, and frequent exercise also lowers the risk of developing cancer.



Treatment

Expectations

- During cancer treatment, your relationship with food will change due to the symptoms that the cancer will and the treatment will cause.

Recovery

- Follow the normal nutrition recommendations that we have explained in other brochures
- Cancer survivors who exercise frequently have low levels of anxiety and depression, and a better quality of life

