



Eat Smart, Eat Healthy - Decrease Your Risk of Cancer

Experts believe that one in four cancers may be linked to diet. Our diets are made up of many types of foods. Some of these substances may increase our risk of cancer but others may protect us.

Eating a balanced diet is one of the best choices one can make because it can also help to reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes mellitus and obesity.

What is eating healthy?

- Eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of plentiful fruit and vegetables. Try to eat 5 portions per day (A portion is equivalent to 1 medium fruit, ½ cup cut fruit, ¾ cup pure fruit juice, ½ cup raw or cooked vegetables).
- It is best to eat a variety of different coloured fruit and vegetables as different colours signify different nutrients. As a suggestion; cabbages, covo, rape, lettuce, spinach, okra, green beans, red and green pepper munyemba, munyovhi, carrots, beetroot, garlic, mufushwa, pumpkin leaves, butternuts, tomatoes, cucumbers, pawpaw, oranges, strawberries, mangoes, mazhanje, matamba and other Zimbabwean wild fruits in season.
- Eat more fibre like whole grain bread, straight run mealie meal, sorghum, millet, brown rice, oats, fruit and vegetables.
- Limit red meat and rather include fish, chicken, kapenta, beans, lentils, soya products, flying ants, edible worms such as madora.
- Avoid fatty foods, sugary foods, salty or junk food, oily takeaways, crisps, refined and processed foods. A high fatty diet increases your risk of breast, colon and prostate cancer.
- Choose low fat milk, yoghurt and non fatty margarines. Limited use of butter is acceptable.
- Try to eat three meals a day and a snack of your favourite fruit or vegetable.

What are smart cooking tips?

- Eat a variety of some raw or uncooked vegetables each day.
- Mostly steam or bake your food.
- Cut down on frying, braai's or grilling, avoid reusing cooking oil.

- Never eat burnt meat, you can use foil for braaing.
- Use more herbs and less salt to maximize food flavour.
- Keep a full diary of what you eat.
- Introduce new dietary changes slowly.

Some drinking tips

- Drink six to eight glasses of clean water per day.
- Avoid fizzy sweetened drinks
- Take fruit juices or juices that can be diluted.
- Limit alcohol intake; alcohol increases risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, oesophagus, liver, colon, rectum and breast.
- Drink tea that contains antioxidants such as rooiboos, Chinese green tea or tea without milk.

Helpful hints - eating after chemotherapy

- If you are feeling sick, tell your doctor because anti-nausea drugs can be prescribed.
- Avoid eating or preparing food when you feel sick.
- Avoid fatty fried foods or foods with strong smells.
- Eat several small snacks and meals and chew food well.
- Peppermint tea, ginger tea, ginger biscuits can help reduce feelings of sickness.
- If you have diarrhoea, eat less fibre; if constipated eat more fibre and drink more fluids, even warm drinks.
- Fresh pineapple chunks can help to keep your mouth fresh.
- Avoid tobacco, hot spices, vinegar and salty foods as these may irritate the mouth.
- Let your doctor know if you have mouth sores and infections. Your doctor may prescribe medicines for the sores and mouth infections.

“To reduce your risk of cancer, eating a balanced diet and exercising regularly are the best choices you can make for a healthy mind and body.”