



From the desk of the Registered Dietitian: *Rachel Robinson, RD, Chief Clinical Dietitian*



October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Although more research needs to be done on diet and breast cancer, findings suggest that physical activity, a healthy diet (particularly one low in fat and high in vegetables and fiber), and a healthy weight can help reduce the risk of breast cancer or the cancer coming back. No food or diet can *prevent you* from getting breast cancer, but some foods can make your body the healthiest it can be, boost your immune system, and help keep your risk for breast cancer as low as possible. While no food or diet can *cure* cancer, some of them may help control treatment side effects or help your body get well after treatment. Here are some nutrition tips to get you started.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight may help reduce the risk of breast cancer coming back. Studies have shown that women who gained weight after their breast cancer diagnosis had an increased risk of recurrence. Studies on the risk of first-time breast cancer suggest that overweight women have an increased risk of breast cancer after menopause compared to women at a healthy weight.

A healthy eating plan should include some physical activity. Aim for 3 to 4 hours of walking per week to start. If you're having treatment right now, you may need to start slowly and work up to this. This does not need to be done all at once; it can be done 10 minutes at a time.

No Foods or Supplements Are Linked Specifically To Breast Cancer

There is no strong evidence that any specific foods or supplements will lower the risk of getting breast cancer or reduce the risk of recurrence; however, research has shown that getting the nutrients you need from a variety of foods, especially fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, can make you feel your best and give your body the energy it needs.

What Does Healthy Eating Look Like?

- Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit - more than 5 cups a day.
- Include whole grains in your diet such as oats, bran cereal, brown rice, popcorn, and whole wheat breads and pastas.
- Try to limit your saturated fat intake to less than 10% of your total calories per day, and limit your fat intake to about 30 grams per day.
- Eat foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon, flax, walnuts, olive oil, and avocado.
- Choose more plant proteins like tofu, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds.
- Avoid trans fats, processed meats, and charred or smoked foods.