

# YOUR PERSONAL CANCER-PREVENTION PLAN

While government, science, and advocacy groups all need to be involved in the mission to create a cancer-prevention agenda, individuals should be as well. Obesity, poor diet, and lack of exercise account for almost one-third of cancer fatalities in the United States, so healthy behavior will lessen our risk. Here, an action strategy you can start today.

## FOLLOW THE CANCER-PREVENTION DIET.

✔ **Buy organic.** Exposure to certain pesticides is linked to at least nine different cancers. Buy foods with the USDA-certified organic seal.

✔ **Make fruits and vegetables daily companions.** Consume a range of fresh, colorful produce. Berries, cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cabbage), tomatoes, and dark-green leafy vegetables are especially potent cancer fighters.

✔ **Add fiber to your diet.** Every 10 g of daily fiber intake reduces the risk of colon cancer by 10%. Good sources include whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Aim for 25 g daily.

✔ **Eat more fish.** Fish that are low in saturated fat and high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, Atlantic mackerel, Arctic char, and sardines, reduce inflammation, which is linked to cancer.

✔ **Drink green tea.** Green tea contains catechins, antioxidants in a class of compounds called polyphenols, which may protect cells from DNA damage, strengthen the immune system, and activate enzymes that curb tumors.

✔ **Get enough vitamin D.** Higher blood levels of this vitamin are associated with lower rates of colon, breast, ovarian, renal, pancreatic, and prostate cancers. Have your blood level tested, and discuss

supplementation options with your doctor.

✔ **Flavor your food with turmeric.** Another polyphenol, this Indian spice has anti-inflammatory properties.

✔ **Avoid red meat.** Beef, pork, and lamb are linked to cancers of the colon, prostate, pancreas, and kidney.

✔ **Limit alcohol consumption.** Alcohol is a risk factor for oral cancers; cancers of the esophagus, liver, colon, and breast; and possibly pancreatic cancer. Women should have no more than one drink daily; men, no more than two.

✔ **Don't eat trans fats.** Trans fatty acids, used in baked goods and

Teal ribbons represent ovarian cancer awareness.



deep-fried foods, raise the risk of prostate and invasive breast cancers. Don't buy anything containing partially hydrogenated oil, code for trans fats.

#### CREATE A CANCER-FIGHTING HOME.

✔ **Keep out toxins.** Clean with products that use organic ingredients; filter tap water; and look for cosmetics, moisturizers, and hair-care products without parabens, chemicals that have estrogenlike properties that may stimulate hormone-related cancers.

✔ **Avoid BPA and BPS.** Research suggests there are links between cancer and BPA and BPS, both of which are found in plastic bottles and the inside coating of cans. Look for cans labeled *BPA-free* and plastic containers with the recycling numbers 1, 2, or 4.

✔ **Minimize dry cleaning.** Perchloroethylene, a dry-cleaning solvent, causes cancer in animals. Find a dry cleaner that doesn't use it, or air your clothes out after bringing them home.


✔ **Keep your cell phone away from your face.** Mobile phones use a form of electromagnetism that has been classified as "possibly carcinogenic to humans." When on your phone, use a headset, speakerphone, or Bluetooth device.

#### BE A MORE PROACTIVE MEDICAL CONSUMER.

✔ **Get cancer-prevention vaccines.** Everyone needs to get the hepatitis B vaccine, which helps prevent liver cancer. The HPV vaccine, which protects against many viral strains that cause cervical cancer, is advised for all females ages

11 to 26 and all males ages 11 to 21.

✔ **Be screened appropriately.** The colonoscopy is the gold standard for detecting colon cancer; the Pap test, for cervical cancer; and mammograms, for breast cancer.

✔ **Limit exposure to medical radiation.** Ask your doctor why a test is recommended and whether there is an alternative that does not use radiation. 



Adapted from *A World Without Cancer: The Making of a New Cure and the Real Promise of Prevention*, by Margaret I. Cuomo, MD (Rodale, 2012). To buy the book, go to [prevention.com/cuomo](http://prevention.com/cuomo)