



## Survivorship: Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight, eating a plant-focused diet, and being active are the most important things (after not smoking) you can do to reduce your risk of cancer. Being overweight can increase your risk for several types of cancer, including breast cancer after menopause, prostate, and endometrial cancers. Excess weight has also been found to increase the risk of recurrence for survivors of these cancers. The foods you eat and the amount of exercise you get can also have an impact on your cancer risk.



Maintaining a healthy weight – or shedding some extra pounds – is best achieved through permanent changes in what you eat/drink and increasing your activity. Some tips for having a cancer-fighting diet and maintaining a healthy weight include:

- Make plants and fiber the stars of your diet show. Two-thirds of your plate should be non-starchy vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes (beans, lentils). The last third may be a lean protein such as fish, chicken, or dairy foods – think of those as the “side dishes” - or keep it all plant-based!
- Limit your intake of red meats (beef, pork, lamb) to 12-18 ounces – or 3 portions - per week.
- Aim for 30 grams of dietary fiber a day. Fiber reduces the risk of heart disease and diabetes and most Americans do not get enough. Fiber also makes you feel full – reducing the amount of other food you will eat! Dietary fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains (such as oatmeal, brown rice, whole-wheat bread), and legumes (beans, lentils, peas).
- Cut out the sweetened beverages! Sodas, fruit juices, sports drinks, and sweetened coffee and tea all bring unnecessary sugar and calories. Drink water instead. Add slices of fruit, lemon or limes for flavor. Drink tea or coffee without sugar or cream.
- Avoid “fast food” and processed foods. These are high in fat, sugar, and sodium.
- Get moving!
  - Start by sitting less. Take a walk around between meetings at work, park farther from the store’s front door, walk the dog.
  - Try to get 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week.
  - Don’t forget your muscles. Strength training (using weights or exercises that use your own body weight like push-ups) helps build muscle. Muscle helps burn calories.

Start with a small change and add more small changes over time. Small changes make it easier to stick with your new healthy habits. And if you fall off the horse, get right back on.

Learn more about reducing cancer risk on [OncoLink](#) or from the [American Institute for Cancer Research](#).

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