

... October 2011 ...

## QUICK TAKES

### Cancer Prevention

Screening tests are one important element of cancer prevention. Healthy lifestyle choices are another. Your cancer prevention strategy should include these positive choices:

- **Don't neglect cancer screenings:** Early detection saves lives.
- **Avoid tobacco:** Cutting out tobacco will *immediately* reduce your risk for cancer of the lung, throat, bladder, kidney, pancreas and mouth.
- **Get moving:** Regular physical activity -- about 30 minutes on most days -- decreases the risk of breast, colon, prostate and uterine cancers.
- **Limit alcohol:** Moderate to heavy alcohol use is linked to breast cancer in women and to cancers of the liver, mouth and throat in both sexes.
- **Protect your skin:** Nine of every 10 skin cancers could be prevented by proper use of sun protection.
- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Obesity is estimated to cause 14 percent of cancer deaths in men and 20 percent of cancer deaths in women. Obesity also can make tumors more difficult to detect and treat.

## Cancer Prevention on Your Plate

The American Cancer Society estimates that one out of every three cancers in the U.S. is linked to excess body weight, poor nutrition or physical inactivity. While these factors are all related and may all contribute to cancer risk, body weight seems to have the strongest evidence linking it to cancer. Unfortunately, half of all Americans aren't aware of the role obesity plays in cancer risk. Being overweight or obese is linked to an increased risk for these cancers:

- Colon
- Esophagus
- Gall Bladder
- Kidney
- Pancreas
- Stomach
- Breast (in postmenopausal women)
- Cervix
- Ovary
- Uterus
- Prostate

## A Diet to Prevent Cancer

It stands to reason that a balanced diet that helps you achieve and maintain a healthy weight is the best diet for cancer prevention. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts have thousands of phytochemicals that help protect cells from turning cancerous and prevent cancerous cells from invading healthy tissues.

## Eat More Plant Foods

A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains is believed to reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. In 2003, the International Agency on Research and Cancer reported on the preventive effect of vegetable and fruit consumption on cancer. The effect was strongest for cancers of the mouth, throat, lung, stomach, kidney, ovary, colon, rectum and bladder.

- Eat a variety of at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. They contain many vitamins and minerals, as well as fiber, antioxidants and other good-for-you substances. Because they are generally low in fat and calories, they may also help you maintain a healthy weight, which helps reduce your risk of cancer.
- Choose whole-grain rice, bread, pasta and cereal over processed (refined) grains. Look for whole wheat, pumpernickel, rye or oats as the first ingredient on the food label.
- Eat more beans -- and less meat. Beans -- high in protein and fiber, low in fat and sodium, and rich in B vitamins -- also contain potassium, magnesium, iron and zinc.

# Cancer Prevention on Your Plate (cont.)

## Harness the Power of Antioxidants

Our bodies seem to use certain nutrients in vegetables and fruits to protect against damage to tissues that happens constantly as a result of normal metabolism (oxidation). Because such damage is linked to increased cancer risk, the so-called antioxidant nutrients are thought to protect against cancer. Antioxidants include vitamin C, vitamin E, carotenoids and many other phytochemicals (chemicals from plants). Studies suggest that people who eat more vegetables and fruits, which are rich sources of antioxidants, may have a lower risk for some types of cancer.

## Limit Red Meats, Especially Processed Meats

Frequent consumption of red meat and processed meats has been associated with an increased risk of colorectal, stomach and pancreatic cancers. The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) and the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) recommend limiting red meat consumption to 18 ounces (500 grams) per week. A recent WCRF/AICR expert panel reported: "The evidence on processed meat is even more clear-cut than that on red meat, and the data do not show any level of intake that can confidently be shown not to be associated with risk." Processed meat includes hot dogs, bacon, sausage and lunchmeat. The panel concluded that if a person ate 3.5 ounces (the size of one jumbo hot dog) of processed meat every day, their risk of colorectal cancer would be 36 percent higher than someone who eats no processed meat.

Instead, try lean meats (look for cuts from the loin or round), skinless poultry, fish and shellfish, or legumes (peas and beans) as healthier sources of protein. Save processed meats for special occasions, such as a slice of ham at a holiday gathering or a hot dog at a ball game.

## What About Supplements?

Unfortunately, when it comes to cancer prevention, many of us pay more attention to pills than food. A national survey found that people over age 55 were more likely to take unproven supplements such as garlic or fish oil to prevent cancer than they were to change their diets. Yet a 2007 WCRF/AICR study concluded that overall, dietary supplements are not recommended for cancer prevention.

## Chicken & Chinese Vegetables Makes: 4 servings

The lean meat and rich assortment of vegetables earn this easy stir-fry a place in your cancer prevention diet. The recipe is a handy template for using up any colorful veggies in the fridge. Serve over brown rice to make the dish's health rating climb even higher.

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce  
2 tablespoons rice vinegar  
1 teaspoon honey  
1 teaspoon cornstarch  
2 teaspoons Chinese chili paste with garlic  
1 tablespoon canola oil  
1 lb (450 g) boneless, skinless chicken breast, sliced into short, thin strips  
1 cup (50 g) sliced shiitake or cremini mushrooms  
1 red bell pepper, seeded and sliced  
3 scallions, thinly sliced on the diagonal  
2 heads baby bok choy, thinly sliced  
1 can (8 oz/240 g) water chestnuts, drained and thinly sliced  
2 cloves garlic, minced

**Source:** *Healthy Living Kitchens*

### Preparation

1. In a medium bowl, mix together soy sauce, vinegar, honey, cornstarch and chili paste. Set aside.
2. Heat oil in a well-seasoned wok or heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken and stir-fry for 6 to 7 minutes, until just browned. Remove to a plate and keep warm. Add mushrooms, red pepper, scallions and bok choy to the pan and stir-fry for about 5 minutes until the vegetables are crisp-tender. Stir in the soy sauce mixture, water chestnuts, garlic and cooked chicken. Simmer for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, until water chestnuts and chicken are heated through.
3. Sprinkle with chopped peanuts and serve.



### Nutritional info per serving

311 Calories  
10g Fat  
1g Saturated fat  
0g Trans Fat  
34g Protein  
22g Carbohydrate  
9g Fiber  
512mg Sodium  
48mg Calcium