

Let's eat and drink healthily

Small
changes
add up to
make a big
difference

Did you know that what we eat and drink can affect our cancer risk?

Eating healthily can help you keep a healthy weight and reduce your risk of some of the most common cancers, like breast and bowel cancer. In this leaflet we'll help you get started with eating and drinking healthily.

So, let's get going!

Ways to cut your cancer risk

Think about what's on your plate

Get the right balance of food on your plate. But what does a healthy plate of food look like?

Let's take a look.

At mealtimes try to:

- **Fill half** of your plate with colourful vegetables or salad. Vegetables like potatoes and yams should be eaten in smaller amounts.
- **Fill a quarter** with foods high in fibre, such as wholegrains like brown rice, whole wheat pasta, wholemeal bread, or wholemeal roti.
- **Fill a quarter** with a healthy protein like fresh fish, fresh chicken, tofu, or pulses like beans and lentils.

Eat more of these

Make sure these foods are a regular part of your diet:

▲ Foods high in fibre

Lentils, beans, oats and wholegrains like brown rice can lower the risk of bowel cancer.

▲ Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and veg are low in calories, high in fibre and are full of vitamins and minerals.

Eat less of these

To eat more healthily, cut down on:

▼ High calorie foods

Fried food, puddings and sugary snacks can make it harder to manage your weight. Keeping a healthy weight reduces the risk of at least 13 different types of cancer.

▼ Processed and red meat

Processed meats like ham, bacon and salami, and red meat (pork, beef and lamb) can increase the risk of cancer.

These foods can still be part of a balanced diet when eaten occasionally.

Now think about your favourite meal.

How can you make it healthier next time you cook it?

For more support on losing weight, speak to your GP. They may be able to refer you to weight management services or a local weight support group.

Take it one step at a time

- **Meat-free Mondays**
Choose one, or even two, days each week where you don't eat meat.
- **Snack smarter**
Swap snacks like crisps and biscuits for fruit or plain nuts, both at home and when you're out.
- **Switch to healthier proteins**
Try swapping processed and red meat for fresh chicken, fish, or beans.
- **Aim for 5 a day**
Fruit, veg and pulses don't need to be fresh – frozen and tinned count towards your 5 a day too.
- **Look at the labels**
Traffic light labels make it easier to choose between products. Pick options with low to medium fat, sugar and salt (green and amber).

Cut down on alcohol

Having a healthy diet likely makes you think about food, but what you drink is important too.

Drinking any type of alcohol increases the risk of cancer. This is because our bodies break it down into a toxic chemical that damages our cells.

Stick to the UK government guidelines of no more than 14 units a week. The less alcohol you drink, the lower your risk of cancer.

Tips to drink less

There are plenty of ways to drink less alcohol. Why not give these a go?

- **Less is better**
Choose a smaller glass and alternate with non-alcoholic drinks.
- **Take days off drinking**
Have some alcohol-free days each week. Choose which days you won't drink and stick to them.
- **Buddy up**
Agree to cut down with a friend or family member and help each other stick to the plan.
- **Don't stock up**
Only buy alcohol when you plan to drink it.
- **Track it**
Making a note of your drinks can help you know how much you're drinking. You can use an online tracker, an app or a notebook.

Watch out for sugar in drinks

Drinks can be higher in calories than you might expect, especially fizzy drinks, energy drinks and flavoured coffees.

Fruit juices and smoothies are also high in sugar, so try not to have more than one small glass a day.

Make water your first choice. Adding fresh lemon can add flavour.

In the UK, many cases of cancer can be prevented

That's why we're supporting people to reduce their cancer risk.

Our leaflets guide you through the changes you can make and are based on lots of quality research carried out over many years.

Thinking about cancer can be worrying, but by making small, healthy changes now, you can make a difference to your risk in the future. Try starting with one or two new habits until you feel ready to add another.

How to find out more

Visit our website

If you're thinking about making changes to improve your health and reduce your cancer risk, get information and tips at **cruk.org/health**

Give us a call

Speak to a nurse for advice or support on our free Nurse Helpline. Just call **0808 800 4040**

If you have any questions about Cancer Research UK or would like to support our work, call **0300 123 1022**