

## Prostate Cancer: Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is important for your overall wellness. Prostate cancer can often be slow growing and even if it is not cured, lots of men live for many years with the disease. Heart disease, diabetes, and obesity are the most common conditions in Canada and some treatments for prostate cancer also increase a man's risk for these conditions. Healthy food choices can help manage and lower the risk of heart disease and diabetes, and can help you work towards and keep your best weight.

Many foods, vitamins, minerals and nutrients are studied to see how they affect the growth of prostate cancer or the chance of prostate cancer returning (recurrence). While not yet proven, research hints that eating some foods and limiting others may be helpful. Many of these same foods are also heart-healthy or good for overall health. For this reason, men may choose to include these foods as part of an overall healthy diet that helps you achieve and maintain your best weight.

It is recommended that men with prostate cancer eat a plant-based diet. A plant-based diet includes mostly vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), nuts and seeds. Moderate amounts of fish, poultry, eggs, and low-fat dairy and small amounts of red meat can also be included in a plant-based diet.

### Notes:

- A plant-based diet is usually high in fibre. If you have diarrhea or other bowel problems you may need to eat less fibre.
- A healthy diet combined with an active lifestyle can help you manage your weight.

If you have diarrhea, concerns about your weight, or for more information and advice based on your specific food and nutrition needs and preferences, speak to your clinic dietitian or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a registered dietitian.

## Recommendations

### **Make plant-based foods the main focus of your meals every day.**

Plant-based foods provide a variety of cancer-fighting compounds such as different vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fibre. These compounds may help prevent cancer and possibly delay cancer growth. More compounds are still being discovered.

Eating food rather than taking supplements is the best way to get plant-based cancer-fighting compounds. Food gives a variety of beneficial compounds that work together in special ways to support your best health.

Plant-based foods are often lower in calories and provide more fibre and less saturated fat than animal foods. Eating mainly plant-based foods provides you with healthy fats and can help you have a healthy weight.

**Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and plant-based protein foods.**

Use your plate as a guide. Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit, one-quarter of your plate with whole grains, and one-quarter of your plate with protein foods like legumes, fish and shellfish, tofu, eggs, low fat dairy, nuts and seeds, lean meat or skinless poultry. Use legumes instead of meat often.

**Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit every day.**

While not yet proven, research hints that eating lycopene rich foods and cruciferous vegetables may slow the growth of prostate cancer.

Lycopene is a carotenoid found in some red coloured plants. This includes tomato products (e.g. tomato paste, sauce, and juice), watermelon, and pink grapefruit

Cruciferous vegetables include bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale and Brussels sprouts.

- Fill half your plate with fruit or vegetables at every meal.
- Eat plenty of different coloured vegetables and fruits including dark green, red, orange, yellow, purple, white, and brown.
- Choose non-starchy vegetables most often. Starchy vegetable include potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes and corn. When you eat these foods, if they have skins, keep them on and serve them with other colourful cancer fighting non-starchy vegetables.
- Choose whole fruits and vegetables instead of juice.
- Eat lycopene rich foods often.
- Eat cruciferous vegetables often.

**Ideas to put into action**

To increase your intake of vegetables and fruit:

- Add fruit to your breakfast. Try berries with oatmeal, sliced banana on peanut butter toast, or serve sliced melon or other fruit as a side.
- Add cooked or sautéed vegetables to a hot breakfast like eggs or baked beans. Tomatoes, bell peppers or mushrooms are breakfast favourites.
- Pack fruit or bite-sized veggies and fruits for snacks (for example: apples, orange, carrots, cherry tomatoes, cucumber slices, bell peppers).
- Have a side salad with your lunch or dinner.
- Increase the portions of vegetables with your meals. A few ideas are roasted broccoli or cauliflower, steamed green beans, sautéed spinach or kale.
- Eat fruit for dessert.

**Include protein foods daily and eat plant-based protein foods often.**

Research links eating too much red meat, processed meats, and saturated fats (the type of fat in animal foods) to increased prostate cancer growth. These types of foods can also increase the risk for colorectal cancer and heart disease.

Men are encouraged to eat plant-based protein foods including legumes (beans, peas and lentils), soy foods, and nuts and seeds often. These foods are rich in cancer-fighting compounds and provide more fibre and less saturated fat than some other types of protein foods. Plant-based protein foods, other than nuts and seeds, are also lower in calories.

- Fill up to ¼ of your plate with fish, shellfish, skinless poultry, eggs, low fat milk and dairy products or small amounts of lean red meats.
- Eat plant-based protein foods often instead of other types of protein foods.
  - Both dried and canned beans, peas and lentils are good options
  - Choose less processed soy foods such as tofu and unsweetened fortified soy beverages
  - Choose raw or dry-roasted unsalted nuts and seeds or peanut or other nut or seed butters that list peanut, nuts or seeds as the only ingredient
- Choose lean meats and low fat protein foods.
  - This includes skinless poultry, fish, eggs, and low fat milk, yogurt and other dairy products (2% milk fat (M.F.) or lower)
- Limit or avoid:
  - Red meat. Red meat includes beef, pork, lamb and goat. If you eat red meat, have it no more than about three times per week and have less than 500 grams (18 ounces) cooked each week.
  - Avoid processed meat, or eat very little. Processed meats include bacon, ham, deli meats and hotdogs.
  - Limit fatty meats, skin on poultry, battered or deep-fried fish, and high fat dairy foods (higher than 2% M.F.)

**Ideas to put into action**

To increase plant-based protein:

- Have hummus or bean dips with vegetables as a snack.
- Add chickpeas or beans to a salad.
- Make dips or sandwich spreads with legumes like chickpeas, black beans, or pinto beans.
- Add legumes like split peas, chickpeas, kidney beans, edamame, lentils, and black beans to soups, stews, casseroles, pastas, and stir fries.
- Try veggie burgers, vegetarian chili, sloppy joes, or vegetable pasta sauce made with plant-based protein.
- Use beans in enchiladas.



- Try legume spreads on flatbread with added chopped vegetables.
- Cook tofu in a vegetable stir fry.
- Make baked goods with pureed legumes.
- Add nuts or seeds to hot or cold cereal.
- Replace half of the meat of chicken in stews, soups, or casseroles with a plant-based protein. For example, mix lentils or beans with beef or chicken.
- Cook a vegetarian meal one day a week. Look for new recipes that don't use meat, search for vegetarian cookbooks or recipes.

**Tips:**

- Use split red lentils or smaller legumes to shorten cooking time.
- Use low-salt canned legumes to lessen cooking time.

**Choose whole grains**

Whole grain foods provide fibre, minerals, vitamins, and other beneficial compounds that may have cancer fighting compounds.

- Fill up to ¼ of your plate with whole grains.

Whole grain foods include:

- |  |                                    |                                       |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> whole oats or oatmeal | <input type="checkbox"/> quinoa    | <input type="checkbox"/> whole barley |
| <input type="checkbox"/> whole grain pastas    | <input type="checkbox"/> bulgur    | <input type="checkbox"/> whole rye    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> whole grain breads    | <input type="checkbox"/> corn meal | <input type="checkbox"/> brown rice   |

Whole grains are a healthier choice than refined grains. Refined grains have had the naturally occurring fibre and other beneficial compounds removed during processing. In Canada, some refined grains have had some of the nutrients added back. They are then called “enriched”.

- Limit the amount and how often you eat refined grain products such as white bread, white pasta, cakes, pastries, cookies made with white flour, and white rice.

**Ideas to put into action**

To increase whole grains by swapping refined grains for whole grains

- Try whole grain bread instead of white or refined.
- Swap your cereal to a whole grain cold cereal, porridge, muesli, or granola.
- Use brown or wild rice instead of white rice.
- Have whole grain pasta instead of white pasta.
- Add quinoa, barley, or bulgur to soups.

## Choose healthy fats

Healthy fats are mainly found in plant-based foods and fatty fish. Unhealthy (saturated) fats are mainly found in animal sources, some highly processed foods and some tropical oils.

- Include foods that give healthy fats in small amounts every day. Healthy fats include:
  - Avocado, fish (especially oily fish like salmon, mackerel, herring and sardines), nuts and seeds and oils such as olive or canola oil.
- Limit foods high in unhealthy (saturated) fat such as:
  - High fat milk and milk products (cheese, cream and ice cream)
  - Butter, palm or coconut oils
  - Skin on poultry
  - Fatty meats, including processed meat products like deli meats, sausages and bacon
  - High fat fast food, convenience food and processed foods such as chips and other snack foods, baked goods, French fries and deep fried foods

Choose smaller portions of foods high in unhealthy fat, if you eat these foods.

For more information, see “Prostate Cancer: Choosing Healthy Fats”

## Limit highly processed foods

Highly processed foods and drinks can be high in added sugar, sodium, and fats. They are often low in the nutrients that help keep you healthy. They are also usually high in calories, which can contribute to weight gain.

- Eat highly processed foods less often and keep portions small when you eat them.

Highly processed foods include:

- sugary drinks like pop, soda, sweetened coffee and tea beverages, lemonade and fruit drinks
- chips and other snack foods
- French fries
- instant noodles and packaged soups
- deep fried foods
- sweetened cereals
- candy
- ice cream
- baked goods such as pie, cake, donuts and cookies

## Changing your eating habits

It is never too early or too late to start making changes for your health and well-being. Even small changes to daily lifestyle habits are likely to have good effects on health.

You can make changes gradually. While some people are able to make a lot of changes quickly, for most people slow gradual change is the most manageable. By making small changes you can find out what really works for you, and find a new way eating that you can stick to for the long term.

**More information:**

For information and advice based on your specific food and nutrition needs and preferences, speak to your clinic dietitian or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a registered dietitian.

Call to register for the **Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program's** Nutrition and Exercise modules (Modules 3N and 3E). To find a PCSC Program near you, please visit: [www.pcscprogram.ca](http://www.pcscprogram.ca).



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