

## Nutrition and Prostate Cancer Overview

How you eat is important after a prostate cancer diagnosis. Healthy food choices can improve your overall health and help manage or lower the risk of osteoporosis, heart disease, and diabetes. This is important as some treatments for prostate cancer can increase a man's risk for these conditions. Your food choices can also help manage side effects from treatments, such as chemotherapy or radiation, which can make it difficult for you to eat well.

There is ongoing research to understand how body weight and dietary factors may affect the growth of prostate cancer or the chance of prostate cancer returning (recurrence). Many foods, vitamins, minerals and nutrients have been studied. At this time, there is no evidence that there is any dietary approach that effectively slows or treats prostate cancer. Yet, 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, you should consider including these foods as part of an overall healthy eating style that helps you be at your best weight.

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

As a cancer survivor and an individual you may have unique nutrition needs that affect your food choices. If you have multiple health conditions, or have side effects from prostate cancer treatment like diarrhea or problems that make it hard to eat, speak with a registered dietitian for food choices that meet your needs.

### Recommendations

#### **Eat a balanced plant-based diet that includes a variety of healthy foods every day.**

- Plant-based foods include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), nuts and seeds. These foods provide a variety of cancer fighting compounds such as different vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fibre.
- Eating a variety of different plant-based foods is more important than eating any single type of food. No single foods, vitamins, minerals or nutrients have been shown to treat cancer.
- Eating mainly plant-based foods can help you have a healthy weight. because they are often lower in calories than animal foods. They are also filling so you can feel satisfied with fewer calories.

#### **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 rich foods. Use legumes instead of meat often.
- Moderate amounts of fish, poultry, eggs, and low fat dairy and small amounts of lean red meat can be included in a healthy diet.

### 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.
- Limit foods high in unhealthy fat and keep portions small when you eat them.

### Limit highly processed foods.

Highly processed foods are not healthy foods. They are usually high in added saturated fat, sugar and sodium, and are usually low in vitamins, minerals and other compounds that are healthy for you. Eating a lot of highly processed foods can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease and weight gain. Highly processed foods include: pop, deep fried foods, candy, baked goods, chips and other snack foods.

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

### Get the recommended amount of calcium and vitamin D.

Calcium and vitamin D are important nutrients for strong bones.

To get the recommended amount of calcium, eat or drink food sources of calcium every day or use calcium supplements if you are not able to get enough from food. Men with prostate cancer are encouraged to meet the daily calcium recommendations as closely as possible, without regularly exceeding them.

#### Calcium recommendations:

- Men 19-50 years aim for 1000 milligrams (mg) calcium daily, but not more than 2000 mg.
- Men over 50 years aim for 1200 mg calcium daily, but not more than 2000 mg.
- Many people will need to take vitamin D supplements to meet their needs as vitamin D is in very few foods. People over the age of 50, are recommended to take a daily vitamin D supplement of at least 400 IU in addition to food sources of vitamin D.

#### Vitamin D recommendations:

- Men 19-70 years need at least 600 IU vitamin D daily, but not regularly over 4000 IU per day.
- Men over 70 years need at least 800 IU vitamin D daily, but not regularly over 4000 IU per day.

Men receiving androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) can have increased risk for osteoporosis and may have higher calcium and vitamin D needs. See: ***Nutrition and Bone Health for Men Receiving Hormone Therapy (ADT)*** for calcium and vitamin D recommendations if you are taking ADT.

### **Eat food rather than take supplements to prevent cancer.**

Food is the best source for vitamin, minerals and other nutrients. Food gives a variety of beneficial compounds that work together in special ways to support your best health.

- Take supplements only to provide what your diet cannot.
- Supplements are not recommended to prevent or treat cancer.

### **Work towards your best weight.**

Weight gain is common in men with prostate cancer who receive hormone treatment. Some research suggests that weight gain could increase the risk of cancer recurrence and other health concerns.

Keeping a healthy body weight also lowers the risk of other health conditions like:

- some other types of cancer
- type 2 diabetes
- heart disease
- high blood cholesterol and other fats
- insulin resistance
- gall bladder disease
- high blood pressure
- osteoarthritis

A healthy diet and active lifestyle can help you manage your weight. If you have concerns about your weight, talk to a registered dietitian.

### **Change your food choices to manage side effects of treatment when you need to.**

Treatments like chemotherapy or radiation therapy can cause side effects that make it difficult for you to eat well.

*Prostate Cancer – Managing Treatment-Related Side Effects:* provides tips for managing different side effects of cancer treatment.

### **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)



This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety. Authorization given to reproduce this information with acknowledgement to the Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program.