



## Nutrition and Prostate Cancer Overview

Healthy eating is important for people with prostate cancer. Nutrition can help manage or lower the risk of osteoporosis, heart disease, and diabetes. This is important as some treatments for prostate cancer can increase a person's risk for these conditions. Your food choices can also help manage side effects of prostate cancer treatments. 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. Everyone could benefit from speaking with a registered dietitian for specific advice to reach your individual nutrition goals. It is especially important to get individual guidance if you have multiple health conditions or have side effects from prostate cancer treatment like diarrhea, or other problems that make it hard to eat. The information in this handout provides some information to help you get started with healthy eating.

### Recommendations

#### Eat a balanced whole food plant-based diet that includes a variety of foods.

- Plant-based foods include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes (e.g., 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 plant-based foods in their whole, unprocessed form is more important than eating any single type of food. No single food, vitamin, mineral, or nutrient has been shown to treat cancer. Read more about the foods of interest and prostate cancer growth in our Healthy Eating and Prostate Cancer handout.
- Eating mainly plant-based foods can help you have a healthy weight. Plant foods are often lower in calories than animal foods and are filling, so you can feel satisfied with fewer calories. Eating more plant foods may also reduce the risk of heart disease and other cancers.

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

#### How much calcium is recommended each day?

- 19-70 years aim for 1000 milligrams (mg) calcium, but not more than 2000 mg.
- Over 70 years aim for 1200 mg calcium, but not more than 2000 mg.

Recommended amounts of calcium include the total intake from food and any supplements

Vitamin D is found in very few foods. Many people will need to take vitamin D supplements to meet their needs. 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.

#### How much vitamin D is recommended each day?

- 19-70 years at least 600 IU vitamin D, but not regularly over 4000 IU.
- Over 70 years at least 800 IU vitamin D, but not regularly over 4000 IU.

People 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 People Receiving Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT) for Prostate Cancer*** 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 people with prostate cancer receiving hormone treatment. Although it is unclear how body weight affects prostate cancer, we do know keeping a healthy body weight 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 – whether you want to lose or gain weight, talk to a registered dietitian.

### **Change your food choices to manage side effects from cancer and cancer treatments when you need to.**

Treatments like chemotherapy or radiation therapy can cause side effects that make it difficult for you to eat well. If you are having difficulty eating, talk with a dietitian for individualized guidance.

### **For more information:**

For information and advice based on your specific food and nutrition needs and preferences, contact the **Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program's Lifestyle Module: Exercise and Nutrition** at 604-875-4485 or toll-free at 1-844-483-1449, or visit: [www.pcscprogram.ca](http://www.pcscprogram.ca).

You can also talk to your clinic dietitian or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 and ask to speak with a registered dietitian.

