

# Eat to *prevent* Cancer



In Australia 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women will develop cancer before they reach the age of 85, and cancer is a leading cause of death. Yet evidence now exists that most cancers are preventable by simply adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Researchers today believe that a healthy diet, achieving and maintaining a normal weight and being physically active, can significantly reduce the risk of cancer. In fact one in every 10 cancers is caused by not eating enough vegetables and fruit.

The internationally acclaimed **World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF)** Report recommends prioritising plant foods, in particular, minimally processed grain foods (wholegrain breads, cereals, pasta or brown rice), non-starchy vegetables, fruits and legumes. A healthy plate, in their opinion contains mostly plant foods.

## THE AMAZING BENEFITS OF PLANT FOODS

Diets based mainly on plant foods – such as Mediterranean, Asian and vegetarian cuisines - have been found to deliver numerous health benefits. Vegetarians, for example, experience lower rates of some cancers than the general population.

- Plant foods contain many beneficial substances, including vitamins, minerals, fibre and phytonutrients. **Phytonutrients** are Mother Nature's gifts that not only provide colour and flavour to foods, but are biologically active substances that protect us from chronic diseases such as cancer. These phytonutrients have antioxidant and anticancer activities that help slow or halt the growth of cancer cells.
- **Fibre** is uniquely found in plant foods. There is no fibre in meat, chicken or fish. People who eat a high fibre diet are less likely to get bowel cancer. Including adequate amounts of fibre in the diet improves the health of our bowel so that cancer is less likely to develop. To get enough fibre in our diet it is important to include a range of plant foods in every meal and snack. High fibre foods include wholegrains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.
- **Plant sources of protein** such as legumes are rich in phytonutrients and fibre and are therefore important foods to help protect us from cancer and other chronic diseases. Legumes also contain vitamins and minerals such as zinc and iron, are naturally free of cholesterol and are minimal in saturated fat. There are many varieties of legumes, including chickpeas, lentils, soybeans, kidney beans, borlotti beans and baked beans (an example of a ready-to-eat legume meal).



## PLANT FOODS AND YOUR WEIGHT

Vegetarians tend to have a lower "Body Mass Index" (BMI) and are generally less likely to be overweight. This may also be a factor in the reduced rates of cancers they enjoy.

## HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO: WCRF'S 10 STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR CANCER RISK:

1. Be as lean as possible staying within the **healthy weight** range.
  2. **Be physically active** for at least 30 minutes every day\*.
  3. **Avoid high kilojoule foods with little nutrition.** Limit processed foods and drinks high in added sugar, fat, or low in fibre such as sugary drinks, including soft drinks, fried foods, crisps, biscuits and pastries.
  4. **Eat mostly foods of plant origin.** Consume more of a variety of vegetables, fruits, wholegrains and legumes, such as beans.
  5. **Limit intake of red meats** (such as beef, pork and lamb) and **avoid processed meats** – including 'lite' or low fat varieties. The recommended serving size of meat is similar to a deck of playing cards (approx. 90 g). However, many Australians consume much larger serves at a meal. Limit your intake to no more than 500g of red meat per week.
  6. If consumed at all, **limit alcoholic drinks** to 2 standard drinks per day for men and 1 for women.
  7. **Limit consumption of salty foods.** Check for sodium on food labels as 75% of the salt we consume comes hidden in packaged foods.
  8. **Don't use supplements to protect against cancer** – aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone.
- Special Population Recommendations:*
9. It's best for mothers to breastfeed exclusively for up to 6 months and then add other liquids and foods.
  10. After treatment, cancer survivors should follow the recommendations for cancer prevention.

## EASY MEAL AND SNACK IDEAS - Make plant foods the focus of every meal and snack.

### Breakfast:

- Wholegrain cereal such as wheat biscuits or rolled oats with low fat (soy) milk and fruit.
- Home-made muesli – why not try our delicious recipe below.
- Soy and linseed toast with baked beans and a small glass of fresh orange juice.

### Lunch:

- Wholegrain sandwich with plenty of salad, a spread of avocado and a lentil patty or felafel balls.
- Roast sweet potato, cherry tomato, mixed greens & macadamia nut salad.
- Soup with a small crusty wholegrain roll – see our tasty and nutritious recipe for Red Lentil & Tomato soup below.

### Dinner:

- Satay tofu and vegetables.
- Stir-fried brown rice with lime, broccolini and spinach.
- Avocado, tomato, pine-nut and basil pizza.

### Snacks:

- Small handful of unsalted nuts or seeds.
- Fruit smoothie made on low fat (soy) milk.
- Frozen fruit kebabs.
- Wholegrain crackers spread with tahini or natural peanut butter.
- Piece of fresh fruit in season.
- Vegetable sticks (red, yellow and green capsicum, carrot, celery, snow peas) and hommus.

### RED LENTIL & TOMATO SOUP

Preparation time: 6 minutes  
Cooking time: 30 minutes

- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 500g packet dried red lentils
- 7 cups water
- 850g can chopped tomatoes
- 415g can tomato soup
- 2 zucchini, grated
- 1 tsp salt

1. In a large saucepan heat oil and sauté onion, garlic and spices.
  2. Add washed lentils, water, tomatoes and soup and bring mixture to the boil.
  3. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
  4. Add zucchini and salt and simmer a further 5 minutes.
- Serves 6.

PER SERVE: 1460 kJ (350 Cal); Protein 23g; Total Fat 6g; Saturated Fat 1g; Carbohydrate 45g; Total Sugars 10g; Sodium 146mg; Potassium 1070mg; Calcium 135mg; Iron 7.5mg; Fibre 14g.



### CINNAMON HOMEMADE MUESLI

- 2 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup processed bran
- 1/2 cup chopped dates
- 1/2 cup chopped pecan nuts
- 1/2 cup chopped dried apple
- 1/2 cup currants
- 1/2 cup LSA\*
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Place all ingredients into a mixing bowl. Stir to combine.
2. Transfer muesli to an airtight container for storage. Lightly shake container before serving the muesli.
3. Serve with chilled soy or dairy milk.

Per serve: 1500 kilojoules (360 calories). Protein 8g. Total Fat 15g. Saturated Fat 1g. Carbohydrate 42g. Total Sugars 20g. Sodium 40mg. Potassium 490mg. Calcium 70mg. Iron 3mg. Fibre 10g.

\*LSA is a combination of ground linseeds, sunflower seed and almonds, available in the health food section of the supermarket. It's perfect sprinkled on cereal or yoghurt, and can be used in muffin and cake recipes. Store leftover LSA in a sealed container in the freezer.



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\*If you are overweight or suffering from a health condition consult your doctor before commencing an exercise program.

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