

Colorectal Cancer



CCNM
Canadian College of
Naturopathic Medicine

Integrative
Cancer
Centre

Functional Foods

- Fiber
 - Fiber supports the health of the digestive system in several ways. It binds and removes toxins from the digestive tract while replenishing the healthy gut bacteria and preventing constipation.
 - **Recommendation: aim for at least 30 grams of fiber every day. This can be achieved by eating 5-8 servings per day of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and beans/legumes.**
- Fish
 - Packed with inflammation lowering omega-3 fats. Eating fish regularly has been associated with a lower risk of developing colorectal cancer.
 - **Recommendation: 2-3 servings of fish per week**
- Brassica (cruciferous) family of vegetables
 - Includes: bok choy, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, broccoli sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, collard and mustard greens, radish, turnip, watercress, kohlrabi, arugula, rapini, rutabaga.
 - Contains compounds called isothiocyanates that have been shown to have several anticancer effects. Population studies have shown that the consumption of brassica vegetables may protect against the development of colorectal cancer.
 - **Recommendation: eat at least 1-2 servings from this family daily, cooked or raw.**
- Garlic
 - Garlic contains compounds that help with DNA repair, slow the growth of cancer cells and decrease inflammation. Eating garlic is associated with a lower risk of colorectal cancer.
 - **Recommendation: Consume any amount of garlic daily (cooked or raw forms)**
- Fermented foods
 - Consuming fermented foods increases intestinal butyrate, a short-chain fatty acid that is essential in feeding the cells that line your digestive tract and keeping them healthy.
 - **Recommendation: eat fermented foods daily, such as unsweetened yogurt, kefir, miso, tempeh, kimchi, sauerkraut, and sour pickles.**
- Dietary sources of folate
 - Dietary folate, but not from supplements, may help prevent polyp formation and colon cancer.
 - **Recommendation: 2 servings of green leafy vegetables daily**
- Nuts:
 - Higher intakes of nuts are associated with a lower risk of colorectal cancer recurrence.
 - **Recommendations: Consume a handful of nuts daily.**
- Coffee:
 - Regular coffee consumption may help reduce risk of distant spread and recurrence of colon cancer in addition to increasing longevity
 - **Recommendation: 2 cups unsweetened, black coffee per day, for those who enjoy coffee.**

Diet

- Carbohydrates
 - Studies have linked diets higher in carbohydrates with increased insulin levels, insulin resistance, obesity, and insulin-like growth factors, all of which contribute to cancer cell growth.
 - A low sugar diet is associated with less recurrence of colon cancer and improved survival.
 - **Recommendation: replace simple, processed, or refined carbohydrates with complex, unprocessed, whole carbohydrates.** This includes all forms of added sugars such as cane sugar, honey, maple syrup, brown sugar, coconut and palm sugar, etc.
 - **Speak with your naturopathic doctor about the number of grams of carbohydrates you should aim for each day.**

- Intermittent Fasting, IF (increasing periods between eating):
 - In general, IF can help lower insulin, insulin growth factors, blood pressure, blood lipids, blood sugar and help maintain a healthy body weight.
 - Common approaches are 13-hour overnight fasting, intermittent calorie reduction (i.e. 50-70% reduction a few days per week), limiting eating to an 8-hour window, longer daily fasts.
 - **Recommendation: consult your naturopathic doctor before starting any fasting routine.**
- Avoid/Limit:
 - Red Meats:
 - Regular consumption of red meats is a known cause of colorectal cancer.
 - **Recommendation: limit as much as possible, no more than 1 serving per month.**
 - Processed Meats:
 - Now considered a class 1 carcinogen, regular consumption has been shown to cause colon cancer.
 - Includes all preserved, smoked, and salt-cured meats i.e. bacon, sausage, and cold cuts
 - Barbecued Meats:
 - Charred meats contain heterocyclic amines and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, both of which are known to cause cancer.
 - Sugar-sweetened beverages:
 - Regular consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (i.e. soda, fruit juice or lemonade) is linked to an increased risk of colon cancer recurrence
 - Alcohol:
 - Alcohol consumption is strongly linked with an increased risk of several cancers including colon cancer. Studies show that higher intake is associated with a higher risk.
 - **Recommendation: If you must consume alcohol, aim for 3 or less drinks per week.**

Exercise

- Inactivity and obesity are two of the strongest risk factors for colorectal cancer. Studies suggest physical activity may prevent up to 15% of cases. The benefits are not limited to cancer prevention as those with cancer can reduce their risk of recurrence and mortality by up to 50% with regular exercise.
- Consider exercise a part of your treatment. Studies support exercising during cancer treatment, resulting in less fatigue and better overall quality of life. After treatment, exercising regularly is associated with less recurrence and improved survival rates.
- **Recommendation: 30 minutes of exercise, 5-7 days of the week (150 minutes total per week).** This can be divided in time, but the goal is to get your heart rates up. Monitor your recovery period, which should be shorter than the duration of the activity itself. Speak with your naturopathic doctor about specific exercise recommendations for you.

Lifestyle

- Smoking Cessation
 - Smoking is associated with a 20-60% increased risk of colon cancer. If you smoke, ask your naturopathic doctor about support in quitting.
- Vitamin D Supplementation
 - According to the American Cancer Society, people who are vitamin D deficient have a 31% higher risk of developing colorectal cancer.
 - Vitamin D levels should be tested in order to determine an appropriate supplemental dose.
- Chronic stress can lead to an overproduction of cortisol and adrenaline, which can cause poor blood sugar management and increased body fat.
 - The following are tools that can help you feel calmer and better manage your stress:
 - Gratitude journaling, meditation, prayer, volunteer work, hobbies
 - Spending time in nature (gardening, hiking, etc.)
 - Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programs have been shown to reduce markers of stress and inflammation cancer survivors.
 - Laughter, even forced laughter reduces stress!