

## Super Foods that Fight Cancer

**Cancer.** The very word strikes fear, and with good reason. Each year nearly 14 million people worldwide are diagnosed with cancer, and 7.6 million die from the disease.<sup>1</sup> However, evidence shows that 30 - 40 percent of these deaths are preventable, and one-third can be cured through early diagnosis and treatment.

We look for a magic bullet, a single cause and cure, but in vain. Cancer is not just one disease—it is a group of more than 100 diseases. There are many factors—genetic, environmental, lifestyle, some mysterious. The search for a cure is a multibillion dollar industry, ranging from conventional to exotic.

An important weapon is found in the produce department of your grocery store. It is nature's "Department of Defense." Foods high in saturated fat and low in plant fiber increase the risk of numerous types of cancer and obesity.<sup>2 3</sup> **Fight back!** Eat plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans to reduce your risk of developing cancer and help you fight a better battle if cancer does occur.

Research published by the **American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR)** and others show several categories of nutrients and foods that have been shown to provide powerful benefits in preventing and fighting certain cancers.<sup>4</sup> According to the AICR, at least two thirds of your plate should contain colorful, cancer-fighting vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and/or beans.<sup>5</sup> AICR has an online nutrition guide.<sup>6</sup> Here are just a few cancer-fighting superheroes featured in a recent AICR report, *Foods That Fight Cancer*.<sup>7</sup>

**Beans.** This includes all bean varieties (pinto, black, chickpeas/garbanzo, lima, soybeans, etc.), peas (green peas, split peas), and lentils. These high-fiber winners contain saponins, protease inhibitors, and phytic acid. Also known as phytochemicals, they protect cells from genetic damage that can lead to cancer. Protease inhibitors slow the division of cancer cells, and phytic acid slows tumor progression. The soluble fiber in beans helps regulate insulin and blood sugar.

**Berries and Grapes.** Berries are rich in fiber and vitamin C. They also contain phytochemical ellagic acid (especially strawberries and raspberries). Ellagic acid has shown protective benefits against cancers of the skin, bladder, lung, and esophagus in

laboratory studies. Its antioxidant properties can deactivate certain cancer-causing agents and slow cancer cell growth.

Blueberries contain compounds that reduce DNA damage. Red grapes, and to a lesser extent grape juice, contain resveratrol, a compound that has been shown to slow cancer cell growth and inhibit tumor formation in lymph, liver, stomach, skin, and breast cells.

**Cruciferous Vegetables.** These include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, and kale. They contain numerous compounds called phenols that activate enzyme systems that detoxify cells, diffuse cell damage, and inhibit tumor growth. Human studies link high intake of these vegetables with lower risk for lung, stomach, colorectal, prostate, and bladder cancer.

**Dark Leafy Greens.** Spinach, kale, romaine and leaf lettuce, mustard and collard greens, and Swiss chard pack a punch when it comes to fiber, folate, minerals, and carotenoids such as lutein and zeaxanthin. Carotenoids not only help prevent cancer via antioxidant protection, they also may inhibit the growth of certain types of breast and skin cancer cells. They are also associated with lower lung and stomach cancer incidence. Folate is linked to lower colorectal and ovarian cancer risk. Try lightly steamed greens with a drizzle of olive oil, lemon, and salt for a tasty treat.

**Tomatoes.** Tomatoes form part of a tasty team of red foods that contain lycopene, a powerful carotenoid that fight cancer. Other members of this flashy family include red or pink fruits such as watermelon, papaya, pink guava, and pink grapefruit. Lycopene in tomatoes shows inhibitory effects on breast, lung, and endometrial cancer cells.

**Whole Grains.** Whole wheat products, brown rice, whole grain oats, corn, and kasha are high in fiber and nutrition, but low in calories. They contain varying amounts of antioxidants, phenols, lignans, phytoestrogens, and saponins, which decrease cancer risk in general. Data from 40 different studies showed a 34 percent lower risk of cancer overall in those who have a generous intake of whole grains compared to those who eat very little whole grains.

Positive lifestyle steps can help prevent cancer. Fill your cart with a wide variety of fruits and vegetables—nature’s cancer fighters. They’re colorful, tasty, and inexpensive.

**Other strategies:** Foods high in saturated fats and low in fiber, obesity, and sedentary habits are all linked to increased cancer risk and lower survival rates when cancer does occur.<sup>8</sup> **Fight back!** Healthy lifestyle habits to fight cancer include not only healthful foods but also daily exercise, sunshine (for vitamin D), maintaining a healthy weight, stress management, social support, adequate rest, and leaving alcohol and tobacco alone.

## *The Living Word*

We live in a world of trouble and sin where bad things happen that we do not understand. But God has given us principles that promote health and invites us to Him with our trials and fears. He promises:

**Strength and comfort when sickness occurs. “The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed.” Psalm 41:3**

**Wisdom and guidance for each day. “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” Psalm 32:8**

**Hope and healing for the future.** For the believer, the promise of the resurrection and earth made new guarantee healing beyond the uncertainties we face here. **“And no inhabitant will say, ‘I am sick’; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.” Isaiah 33:24 “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:4**

God invites you to put your trust in Him for physical, mental, and spiritual health knowing that eternal life with no more pain and suffering is sure to come!

Visit us at [LifestyleMatters.com](http://LifestyleMatters.com) or call 1-866-624-5433 for your resources to build a better brain, body, and lifestyle.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/what-is-cancer/statistics>.

<sup>2</sup> Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer. AICR Report.

<sup>3</sup> Acta Biomed 2006; 77(2):118-123.

<sup>4</sup> Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer. AICR Report.

<sup>5</sup> AICR report: Foods That Fight Cancer. Copyright 2007.

<sup>6</sup> A Cancer Nutrition Guide—American Institute for Cancer Research.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.aicr.org/foods-that-fight-cancer/>

<sup>8</sup> Am J Clin Nutr 2006; 84(6):1456-62.