

DIET AND CANCER INFORMATION



Marie Keating

FOUNDATION

making cancer less frightening by enlightening

THE SIMPLE FACTS ABOUT DIET AND CANCER

The foods you choose each day are one of the most important factors in helping protect you against cancer. Many people eat a diet that is far too high in fat and calories. Even more important is what the average diet lacks: a variety of vegetables, fruits and wholegrain foods.

Eating a healthier diet protects against cancer, but also against heart disease, stroke and a number of other health problems.

How is diet related to cancer?

Dietary factors are thought to account for around 30% of cancers in the developed world and 20% in developing countries. Research shows that many forms of cancer are preventable and that as many as 30-40% of all cancer cases can be prevented by the types of food we choose to eat.

Large reductions of physical activity over the last thirty years along with increasing obesity in many populations have rendered many people more susceptible than ever to developing certain cancers. Obesity particularly can increase the risk of cancers of the food pipe, bowel, breast, womb, and kidney, and large quantities of alcohol can lead to oesophageal, liver and throat cancers, along with an increase in the risk of Breast Cancer.

How can I be healthy and help prevent cancer?

Eat a balanced diet that is low in fat, refined carbohydrates and rich in fruit, vegetables, pulses, lean meat, fish, poultry and wholegrains.

Try to eat at least five different portions of fruit and vegetables every day – they are excellent sources of vitamins and fibre.

- Eat high-fibre foods like wholegrain bread, high-fibre breakfast cereals like porridge & muesli, wholegrain pasta, beans, peas and lentils.
- Eat smaller and fewer portions of processed fatty meats – try seafood, and protein rich beans, nuts or seeds instead.
- Select foods low in fat and salt.
- Read and compare food labels.

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- Ensure adequate fluid intake.
- Prepare and store foods safely.
- And most importantly try to ensure nutritional balance in your daily intake.

Can I take a supplement instead of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day?

In some circumstances dietary supplements are useful – for example, taking folic acid during pregnancy. However, scientists believe that it is the complex mix of vitamins and minerals found naturally in foods that help to reduce our risk of disease. Scientists now think that these nutrients work together to help fight off illnesses such as cancer.

The same effect cannot be achieved by taking dietary supplements. Therefore, the best advice is to carry on eating your five or more portions of vegetables and fruits a day and avoid popping those pills as a substitute for a healthy diet.

Exercise & diet

A stable weight is maintained by balancing energy intake through food with energy expenditure through physical activity. When this balance is disrupted, and we consume more calories than we use up, the body stores excess energy in the form of fat.

- Try to maintain a healthy body weight by combining a balanced diet with regular exercise.
- Try to do half an hour's moderate activity at least five times a week.
- If you are a woman, drink no more than 2 units of alcohol each day and a maximum of 14 units per week.
- If you are a man, drink no more than 3 units of alcohol each day and a maximum of 21 units per week.
- Aim to have 3-4 alcohol free days per week.

Are there any particular foods that can protect me against cancer?

No, there aren't any 'magic' foods that will prevent cancer. However, research has shown that eating a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, pulses, cereals and other starchy foods will certainly help to reduce your risk.

Remember:

Early detection and early treatment will give the best chance for individuals with cancer. See your Doctor if you have any abnormal symptoms.

The Marie Keating Foundation acknowledges the support of Ms Aveen Bannon, Consultant Dietitian, Dublin Nutrition Centre.

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Who we are

Following the death of their mother Marie in 1998, each member of the Keating family promised that they would do everything they could to bring an end to Breast Cancer. They committed to provide all women and their families with the necessary information to prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest stages. Their collective aim was to make cancer less frightening by enlightening. The Marie Keating Foundation is the realisation of a family's dedication – it is a promise to themselves, in action.

The Marie Keating Foundation – working together to beat cancer through awareness, education and support services.

By:

- Increasing awareness and knowledge on cancer related issues to all sectors of the community.
- Promoting early detection and treatment.
- Providing practical support services to those affected by cancer.
- Working closely with other cancer organisations to optimise efforts to eradicate cancer as a life threatening disease.

The Foundation's vision is a future free from the fear of cancer

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What we do

Public awareness

Community information service

The Foundation, through its mobile information units, reaches out to as many people as possible. The Foundation believes that by doing so, more people will not only become more aware of the risk factors but also become our partners in spreading our education message.

We have in-unit information presentations as well as prosthetic teaching aids on board in order to educate, show and highlight the importance of early detection and self awareness. The unit is equipped with take home information leaflets on each of the key cancers and our trained nurses provide the public with practical advice on healthy lifestyle choices.

Workplace presentations

Our nurses also visit workplaces and community groups as part of our health promotion message. They offer advice and help to groups of men and women as part of annual health days or as a once off assistance to staff. Arrangements can also be made for staff to speak to our nurse individually and in strict confidence.

National campaigns

Focussing on the key cancers, the Foundation invests in a number of major media campaigns throughout the year. October is internationally recognised as breast cancer awareness month and the Foundation mounts a month long targeted campaign using radio and print media to communicate the message of early detection. Other campaigns focus on men's cancers with our Men Keeping Fit campaign, as well as other specific more targeted ones.

Education

The Foundation, in recognising the importance of education of young people in reducing the prevalence of cancer, invested in the development of a schools programme targeted at senior level students in addressing the facts, risks, and the need for early intervention. The programme can be adapted for use with other young people in different settings.

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The comfort fund

This fund assists those in financial difficulty as a direct result of their illness. Working in close partnership with the Irish Breast Care Nurses Association, the Foundation provides financial support for practical assistance with childminding or transport costs, hotel accommodation before or after treatment, or even for a well deserved weekend break. We consider that this service is essential in minimising the day to day problems facing women during treatment, in addition to the already existing trauma and uncertainty.

The oncology waiting room refurbishment programme

Where the need arises, the Foundation refurbishes hospital oncology waiting rooms in making them more comfortable for patients who use them, often for long and protracted periods of time.

On February 2nd 1998, our mother Marie died from Breast Cancer. At the time and all through her illness, we could do nothing to help our Mother who had, all our lives, done everything for us.

We, the Keating family have set up this charity in her name to try to help and prevent others going through what Mam went through and what we are still going through to this day. This is also to show that such a wonderful mother and person did not die in vain.

Take care.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "The Keating Family". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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