

NUTRITION TO NOURISH



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Returning to Whole Foods, Plant-Based Eating

As we head out of winter and into the warmer temperatures of spring, remember to continue adding those plant-based foods to your meal planning for a healthy pattern of fueling your body. They are becoming much more accessible now as produce stands and farmer's markets open throughout the area. Those healthy choices will support your current and future health by preventing a variety of diseases that range from the common cold to chronic disease.

Cancer is one of those diseases, and the World Health Research Fund estimates that 40% of cancers are preventable, partially via healthy nutrition habits (in addition to including physical activity in your day, avoiding sun exposure, and avoiding tobacco products).

According to the American Society of Clinical Oncology position statement on obesity and cancer, maintaining a healthy body weight throughout life may be one of the most important lifestyle factors in reducing cancer risk, second only to not using tobacco products. Choosing a healthy eating pattern to reduce the risk of developing cancer and reducing the risk of cancer recurrence can be successful through a variety of mechanisms. These include effects on chronic inflammation, hormones, epigenetic changes, antioxidant de-

fenses, and the intestinal microbiota. Accomplishing this is best undertaken using a consistent pattern of consuming whole, plant based foods (in combination with physical activity) as opposed to focusing on a single nutrition component or fad diets.

In this issue, you'll learn some action steps you can take so you can enjoy healthy and delicious foods throughout the spring and summer and have energy for those warm-weather activities!

Happy and Healthy Eating,

Mary Beth



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Special points of interest:

- Red Meat—does it have nutrition benefits, and is there a limit to how much you should eat?

Action Steps for a Healthy You



1. Focus on a plant-based diet.

“Plant based” can range from vegan to consuming a diet with mostly plant based foods but still including some animal products. If you usually eat animal products, start with including one plant based food (e.g., fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, pulses) with each meal and build from there; or replace meat with beans, tofu, or nuts for one meal each week. When consuming animal products, aim for lower fat options such as chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, and fat free or low fat plain dairy products. Limit red meat and avoid processed meats, which are known to increase colorectal cancer risk.

Plant based foods are packed with phytochemicals, antioxidants, fiber, and other components that work to prevent cancer in a variety of ways at different stages from development through growth and spread of malignant cells.



2. Veg out on a variety of fruits and vegetables with your meals.

Each color of fruits and vegetables offers different benefits based on their phytochemical and antioxidant content as well as the vitamins and minerals they contain. Focus on enjoying an assortment of richly colored produce to obtain the greatest health advantage. Ideas include spinach, kale, Swiss chard, broccoli, cabbage, apples, cherries, red grapes, and cranberries. Aim for one serving each of a fruit and vegetable with each meal and snack on veggies (carrots, cucumbers, peppers) with hummus or apples with nut butter.

3. Fill up on fiber-rich foods with every meal.

Fiber not only helps you to feel satiated for longer, but it also reduces the desire to overeat because it slows digestion. It also helps reduce the risk for cancers of the colon and rectum by protecting the lining of the colon and diluting harmful substances while increasing how quickly they are excreted from the body. Aim to enjoy 25-30 grams of fiber daily from a variety of high fiber foods to include fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, beans, legumes, oats, barley, quinoa, and other whole grains. Start adding fiber slowly if your fiber intake is low, and remember to hydrate with eight cups of water daily along with increasing fiber intake.

4. Slow your Roll (with Eating)

Eating too quickly can easily lead to overeating. Instead, focus on enjoying your meals by taking small bites, chewing each bite thoroughly, focusing on the appealing taste and texture of the food, and setting your utensils down between bites to savor the food and enjoy the conversation of those joining you at meal time. Slowing your eating will also help you recognize the signs of satiety to prevent overeating.

5. Snub Added Sugar

Added sugars are empty calories that easily lead to weight gain, inflammation, overeating, and increased waist circumference. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of developing twelve different types of cancer (in addition to increasing your risk of heart disease and diabetes). Some suggestions to decrease intake of added sugars include drinking water or fruit infused water instead of soda or juice, choosing fresh fruit with nuts or nut butter as a snack instead of candy or high sugar cereal bars, and forego the ice cream for air-popped pop corn or a cup of herbal tea as an evening snack. Add the natural flavors of cinnamon, nutmeg, citrus, or mint to your tea instead of sugar, honey, or agave to keep it sugar free naturally. According to the American Heart Association, men and women should limit daily added sugar to 9 teaspoons (36 grams) and 6 teaspoons (24 grams), respectively. *(continued, top of next page)*



6. Avoid alcohol

Alcohol of any kind has been shown to be cancer-causing by increasing the risk for cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, liver, stomach, colon, rectum, and breast. The American Institute for Cancer Research now recommends not drinking for those who have a goal to prevent cancer. For those who continue to drink, limit daily alcohol to no more than one drink for females and two drinks for males.



In addition to making healthy nutrition choices, remember to plan physical activity and adequate rest into your week to be at your best. Live well, friends!

1. <https://www.wcrf.org/dietandcancer/about-our-cancer-prevention-recommendations/>
2. Ligibel JA, Alfano CM, Courneya KS, et al. American Society of Clinical Oncology position statement on obesity and cancer. *J Clin Oncol.* 2014;32(31)3568-3574

Ask the RD

Question: I keep hearing I should be avoiding red meat. Is it really that bad for me?

Answer: Red and processed meats have received increasing attention as the shift to a whole foods, plant-based diet is encouraged for health and backed by research. While they contain protein, iron, vitamin B12, and zinc; too much red and processed meat has been shown to increase the risk of heart disease as well as colorectal cancer. While strict avoidance is not recommended, it is recommended to limit red and processed meats to no more than 16 oz. (cooked weight) per week. If you need help measuring or estimating the portion size of meats, a 3 oz. portion of cooked red meat is approximately the size of a deck of playing cards. Limiting red and processed meat as much as possible is recommended if you are at an increased risk for colon or rectal cancers or recurrence of those cancers. Research has shown that

every 50 grams per day of processed meats (e.g., three strips of bacon or 1 hotdog) consumed increases colorectal cancer risk by 16%. For every 100 grams of red meat consumed (~ a 3 to 3.5 oz. hamburger, pork chop, lamb chop, or ham), colorectal cancer risk is increased by 12%. The high amount of fat and calories in red or processed meats can also contribute to unhealthy weight gain and obesity, which has been shown to increase the risk of eleven different types of cancer.

Looking for some ways to elevate your plate by decreasing your intake of red or processed meats? Try these tips:

- ◆ Use half of the amount of ground beef in tacos, chili, or enchiladas and add 1-2 cups of black beans to add fiber, protein, and cancer-fighting phytochemicals.
- ◆ If you eat red or processed meat for every meal, try decreasing it to just one meal per day.
- ◆ Use a low-fat ground chicken or ground turkey in place of ground beef.

- ◆ Save hotdogs and hamburgers for special occasions or summer cookouts if you do eat them instead of including them in your weekly meal rotation.
- ◆ Marinate and pan-fry chicken or fish instead of grilling burgers and ribs.
- ◆ Instead of eating meats, increase healthy fat intake and fiber by eating legumes (e.g., beans, soybeans, peas, lentils), nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, and pecans), and seeds (e.g., chia or hempseed) instead. Have beans with rice with seasonings, a salad, and fresh fruit or try an apple with peanut butter or almond butter for a snack.
- ◆ Fill half of your plate with vegetables and fruits to start, and incorporate a rainbow of colors: dark greens, reds, oranges, yellows, and even purple.





Onions



That's right, the produce item of the month is the onion!

Onions are part of the allium family, which has been around for centuries. This family also includes garlic, shallots, scallions, chives, and leeks. Historical uses of the produce from the allium family include treating infected wounds, improving appetite, boosting energy, repelling scorpions, soothing bee stings, relieving colic and croup, reducing fevers, and as a general tonic for colds, sore throat, and earaches.

After U.S. onion breeding programs focused on making onions sweeter, milder, and larger; we now have a wide variety of onion flavors and sizes from which to choose. This has also affected the health benefits of them. Based on research, the smaller onions with a more pungent taste contain the high amount of phytonutrients that are most beneficial for reducing cancer risk and improving heart health.

Onions contain a phytonutrient called quercetin that is classified as a flavonoid. Quercetin has been shown to inhibit inflammation and tumor growth as well as help with immunity, all of which can offer protection from many cancers as well as other chronic diseases. Quercetin is also found in apples and potatoes!

If you can't tolerate either the taste of onions or their digestive-related side effects of gas and bloating, cooked onions as well as the sweet onions may be better tolerated. Also considering taking Beano immediately before you eat anything with onions, which contains an enzyme that may help you better digest and break down the fiber in the onions to prevent unwanted side effects.

If you're interested in adding onions to your meals, try the two recipes included in this newsletter. Other ideas include:

- ◆ Add chopped onions to ground poultry or beef when making tacos, spaghetti, lasagna, etc.
- ◆ Add thinly sliced raw onions to sandwiches or burgers.
- ◆ Add thinly sliced raw onions to salads.
- ◆ Include onions with other roasted or grilled veggies.
- ◆ Add onions as a base to season soups and stews.
- ◆ Sauté onions and include as part of a morning veggie omelet.

<https://www.aicr.org/resources/blog/quercetin-hidden-treasure-in-your-lattes/>

Spanish Rice and Beans

From: **Dishing Out Health** website

<https://dishingouthealth.com/spanish-rice-and-beans-one-pot/#recipe>

Ingredients:

- ◆ 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil or parsley oil
- ◆ 1 yellow onion, finely chopped
- ◆ 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ◆ 1 1/2 tsp paprika
- ◆ 1 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- ◆ 1 tsp. chili powder
- ◆ 1 tsp. dried oregano
- ◆ 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- ◆ 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper (optional for added heat)
- ◆ 2 cups long-grain white rice (such as jasmine or basmati)
- ◆ 1 (14.5 oz.) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes (sub 1 cup jarred salsa)
- ◆ 2 (15.5 oz.) cans kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- ◆ 3 cups vegetable or chicken broth (sub water)
- ◆ 1/3rd cup sliced green onions



Parsley Oil (optional):

- ◆ 3 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley leaves
- ◆ 1/2 tsp. lemon zest, plus 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ◆ 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a large skillet with a fitted lid over medium. Add onion; cook 5 minutes, until softened. Add garlic, paprika, salt, chili powder, oregano, black pepper, and cayenne; cook 2 minutes, stirring often, until aromatic. Stir in rice; cook 2 minutes, until slightly translucent. Stir in tomatoes, beans, and broth (or water). Bring mixture to a boil, reduce to medium-low, and simmer, covered, until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender, about 25 minutes.

Mary Beth Landes, MS, RD, CSO
540.332.5522 or 540.932.5522
mlandes@augustahealth.com

COLORFUL ROASTED SHEET-PAN VEGETABLES

FROM THE EATING WELL WEBSITE AT

[HTTPS://WWW.EATINGWELL.COM/RECIPE/262078/COLORFUL-ROASTED-SHEET-PAN-VEGETABLES/](https://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/262078/colorful-roasted-sheet-pan-vegetables/)

Serves:6

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 30 minutes

Easy!!

Ingredients:

- 3 cups cubed butternut squash (1-inch)
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 cups broccoli florets
- 2 red bell peppers, cut into squares
- 1 large red onion, cut into bite-size chunks
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning or herbs de Provence
- 1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon best-quality balsamic vinegar

Enjoy this colorful recipe with benefits from a variety of disease-protective phytochemicals, and change up the veggies based on what you like and have available!



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Toss squash and 1 tablespoon oil in a large bowl. Spread out on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast for 10 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, toss broccoli, bell peppers, onion, Italian seasoning (or herbs de Provence), salt and pepper in a bowl with remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil until the vegetables are evenly coated.
4. Add the squash to the vegetables in the bowl. Toss to combine. Spread the vegetables out on 2 large rimmed baking sheets, dividing evenly. Roast, stirring once or twice, until the vegetables are tender and browned in spots, 17 to 20 minutes. Drizzle with vinegar.