

Eating to prevent breast cancer

A woman's lifetime risk for developing breast cancer is one in nine. Given that statistic, it's important to look at what you can do to lower the likelihood of developing it. It's true the biggest risk factors - genetics and old age - are beyond our control, but there are lifestyle changes that can make a difference.

The more changes you make, the lower your risk of developing breast cancer. Here's the American Institute for Cancer Research's list of changes to make:

No single food or food component can protect you against cancer by itself, but scientists believe that the combination of foods in a predominantly plant-based diet may help. There is evidence that the minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals in plant foods could interact in ways that boost their individual anti-cancer effects, a concept called synergy. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans top the list of foods to eat.

Those foods above also help with a second important factor - maintaining a healthy weight. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans are low in calories, yet dense in nutrients and protect against weight gain. The risk for cancers of the colorectum, oesophagus, endometrium, pancreas, kidney and breast (in postmenopausal women) is increased by higher body fat.

Other healthy habits for preventing cancer include exercise, not smoking and avoiding alcohol. Studies have shown that women who work out regularly - and vigorously - have a 20 per cent lower risk of developing breast cancer compared to those who rarely exercise.

Studies also show that alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer, both in terms of number of glasses and number of years. Recent studies also found a 20 per cent increase in the risk of breast cancer among smokers.

Other foods with cancer-fighting properties include berries, cruciferous vegetables, dark-green leafy vegetables, flaxseed, garlic, grapes, green tea, soy, tomatoes and whole grains.

Feel full longer

We all know that there's no magic pill for losing weight - not pills, supplements or fad diets. But there is one approach to weight loss that may really help you feel full. If you feel full longer, you're less likely to overeat later, yet not feel deprived. So, how can you feel more full? The UC Berkeley Wellness Letter (October 2009) offers some insights:

Eat slowly. In a study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, women were told to eat as fast as possible using soup spoons for a day; then on a second day, they took small bites using teaspoons, put the spoon down between bites and chewed each bite 20 to 30 times. When the women ate more slowly, they consumed less (67 fewer calories, on average) and felt more satiated afterward.

Start your meal with soup, salad or a fruit. Those foods are low in energy density, a factor that Barbara Rolls at Pennsylvania State University has shown to increase satiety. Researchers have also found that starting a meal with high-calorie foods can increase the total number of calories you eat. So, your soup should be broth - based instead of cream, and your salad dressing should be light.

Eat more protein. For most, protein is more satiating than carbs or fats. A review in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that protein promotes prolonged satiety as opposed to momentary satiety. A study in the International Journal of Obesity found that overweight people on a low-calorie diet who ate eggs for breakfast had greater weight loss than those eating a bagel breakfast with the same number of calories.

Drink water before meals. A study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that women who drank two cups of water a half-hour before breakfast ate, on average, 74 fewer calories than when they didn't drink the water.

Source: www.creators.com