



4 Foods to Avoid With Colon Cancer

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Foods to Avoid with Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is a disease that causes malignant tumors in the cells lining your colon. You may have heard it called colorectal cancer, or cancer of the colon and rectum. That's because your colon and rectum are made of the same tissue, and there is no clear line where your colon ends and your rectum begins. Anyone can get colon cancer, but it occurs more frequently with age. It's the fourth most common cancer (excluding skin cancers) in the U.S., and the risk of developing colon cancer also increases when there's a family history. One good thing to know about colon cancer is that it is one of the easiest to reduce your risk for by watching your diet. So, let's find out which foods to avoid with colon cancer.

Top 4 Foods to Avoid

As with most cancers, obesity, smoking and drinking too much alcohol will increase your risk of developing colon cancer. There are also specific foods you can reduce or cross off your list completely.

1. Red Meat

Reducing red meat consumption to improve your health may sound like old news, but did you know the way you cook meat can also increase the risk for colon cancer? Any meat cooked to well done is bad news for your health. When you are barbecuing, fat drippings that land on hot coals can release polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and some PAHs have been linked to colon cancer.

2. Processed Meat

Processed meats are another food to avoid. The more you eat meat preserved by curing, smoking, salting or adding preservatives like nitrates or nitrites, the higher your risk of developing colon cancer becomes.

3. Trans Fats and Saturated Fats

The dangers of trans and saturated fats have been in the news for years. Preventing colon cancer is another reason to steer clear of foods like cakes, cookies, fried foods, margarine, donuts, pastries and chips. Pro tip: look for hydrogenated oil on labels to weed out trans fats.

As for saturated fats, keep food like butter, egg yolks, fatty cuts of meat and whole milk dairy products to a minimum.

4. Sugar

Studies have shown that people who eat a lot of sugar increase their risk of developing colon cancer later on in life.

You can keep sugar at bay by knowing a food's glycemic index (GI) and glycemic load (GL). The glycemic index tells you how much a certain food will increase your blood sugar level.

You may be thinking that counting calories and reading labels is enough work already, but an online calculator like one from the University of Sydney can make it easier to be sure you are eating healthy GI foods. For example, the GI score for white bread is 75, and the one for specialty grain bread is 53. So, you don't have to give up bread completely. It's as easy as reaching for a different shelf at the grocery store.

Glycemic load is a little more complicated. Glycemic load tells you how much of that carbohydrate is in a serving of a particular food.

What Should You Eat With Colon Cancer?

Appetite changes or weight loss might mean you need to eat protein-rich foods with more calories, like:

- Protein drinks (powdered protein supplements mixed with fruit, milk or yogurt).
- Milk.
- Dairy products.
- Eggs.
- Meat.
- Sauces or gravies.
- Legumes.
- Mono-saturated oils.

It's also suggested to eat many small, nutritious meals and drink fluids after you eat (not during). Eat and drink fortified foods and shakes when necessary. Diarrhea may be prevented by following the bland BRAT diet of bananas, rice, applesauce and toast.

Can you see why you need a dietician? Foods to avoid with colon cancer is not a straightforward topic. One side effect requires you to shun dairy, while another requires you to eat more. These are complicated choices and your health care professionals are there to help you make them.

What Next?

Whether you are adjusting your diet to keep your colon healthy or to stay as strong as possible during treatment, eating well doesn't have to be hard. Your goal isn't to change everything or swap your grocery store for the health food store. But taking the time to read food labels, reduce your sugar intake and swap your steak for chicken or fish a few nights a week is worth the trouble. Your colon will thank you.