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Healthy Eating After Cancer Treatment

By [Austin Park, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, MS, RDN, CDN](#)

Cancer survivorship celebrates life after cancer and is commemorated each June on National Cancer Survivors Day. Many who have been treated for cancer realize how important diet and lifestyle can be during treatment. It is also important to note how critical they are post treatment to support recovery, to regain strength, and to prevent recurrence.

General Guidelines to Keep in Mind

- Focus on an overall, well-rounded diet and lifestyle rather than one food or supplement
- Include a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Limit refined sugar, foods with added sugar, and processed foods
- Include adequate amounts of protein and carbohydrates
- Choose nutrient dense carbohydrates such as quinoa, brown rice, and whole grain bread
- Mindful eating and mindful practices are greatly beneficial to reduce stress levels and help avoid over-snacking on highly processed foods. Meditation, yoga, qi gong, and tai chi are all important practices for calming the mind.
- Be kind to yourself and keep in mind that what works for someone else may not work for you.

Focus on The Following:

Vegetables

- Dark green leafy vegetables such as kale, spinach, collard greens, and swiss chard all contain cancer fighting phytochemicals. They are also sources of calcium which helps to maintain bone health. This is especially important due to the risk of bone loss after cancer treatment.
- Cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, kale, and brussels sprouts, have chemo preventive properties. Try different ways to prepare them: steamed, roasted, sautéed, blended in a smoothie, juiced, chopped in a salad, etc.

Fruits

- Berries such as blackberries, raspberries, acai berries, and blueberries are all good sources of anthocyanins, which are known to limit tumor growth.

Protein

- Protein is needed to rebuild any lean body muscle lost during cancer treatment.
- If you eat animal products, choose organic or antibiotic/hormone free meats and eggs if possible. Try different types of plant protein like seeds, beans, lentils, tofu and quinoa.
- Mix these proteins with whole grains to create a grain/protein bowl – a great way to get a varied amino acid profile in your diet.

Whole Grains

- Try nutrient dense grains like **wild rice, amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat, teff, brown rice and whole wheat bread**.
- Less processed grains are excellent sources of fiber, protein and different minerals that are not available in processed grains and breads.

Fats

- Fatty fish, such as **salmon, sardines, and mackerel** are excellent sources of anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids. They are also great sources of fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamin A and vitamin D, that support healthy immune system function.
- Plant-based sources of omega-3 fatty acids include almonds, cashews, hemp and flaxseeds.

Want to Know More?

Check out our **Nutrition Tips for Breast Cancer Survivors Booklet**, available in PDF form in English and Spanish [here](#).

God's Love Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Austin Park, will lead two free online **Nutrition and Lifestyle Tips for Post-Cancer Treatment** presentations in July with our partners SHARE Cancer Support and Gilda's Club NYC. During these events, he will delve deeper into beneficial dietary and lifestyle recommendations for people who are post-cancer treatment.

Here is how to register:

SHARE Queens Breast Cancer Support Group: July 9th from 7 pm to 8:30 pm

Gilda's Club New York City: July 29th from 1:30 pm to 3 pm.



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