

HEALTHY
MONDAY



American Institute for
Cancer Research

CANCER PREVENTION

This 10-week cancer prevention and survivorship guide includes activities to reduce cancer risk through exercise and healthy eating. Each Monday, participants begin with a recommended activity to promote cancer prevention and healthy living, suitable for all ages and abilities. Starting the week with a renewed commitment to healthy behaviors can help you stay on track with your wellness goals.



How To Use This Guide

Every Monday, reference this program guide to see a recommended activity conducive to cancer prevention and healthy living. The activities are accessible to a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and ability levels, and are designed to promote continued progress over the course of the challenge. By recommitting to healthy habits at the start of each week, you'll always be one-step closer to reaching your wellness goals. [Download all 10 graphics here.](#)

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Eat More Plant-Based Foods

A growing body of research shows that a diet consisting of predominantly unprocessed plant-based foods, like fruits, vegetables, beans, mushrooms, and whole grains, can reduce one's risk of developing a number of chronic diseases and even certain cancers. Doctors are beginning to recommend plant-based diets to their patients as a way to minimize their dependence on certain prescription medications. And despite the many myths to the contrary, a plant-based diet can deliver all the carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals necessary for a healthy functioning body.

Benefits of a Plant-Based Diet

- 1 Lower blood pressure
- 2 Reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- 3 Healthier weight
- 4 Improved cholesterol levels
- 5 Increased longevity

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Easy Ways to Start

Try Meatless Monday: Commit one day of the week to meat-free eating.

Add to your favorite dishes: Don't be afraid to add extra vegetables to your pizza or lasagna or another can of beans to your taco-night spread.

Make them familiar: A can of beans may not excite your taste buds, but when you transform these ingredients into familiar dishes, like burgers or meatballs, they'll become a lot more appetizing.

Goal This Week:

Track your plant-based food intake and try incorporating more plant-based foods into your routine, whether it's an extra serving of fruit with your lunch or going meatless for an entire day.

Walk More, Sit Less

Adopting a consistent walking routine is an important step towards an overall healthier lifestyle and can help reduce instances of chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease; but even an activity as straightforward as walking requires a little bit of planning.

First, **set a daily or weekly walking goal**, such as walking every Monday morning, that focuses on either distance, pace, duration, or some combination of the three. The US Department of Health and Human Services recommends able-bodied adults engage in at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week, so getting in around 30 minutes of walking a day, five days a week is a good goal to work towards. If 30 minutes is too much, start with 15 minutes and add an additional 5 minutes every subsequent day until you reach 30 minutes.

Second, as with any new physical fitness routine, it's important to go at your own pace and aim for steady incremental progress. Dramatic changes don't happen overnight, so trust the process, and help yourself stick with it by making your walks easily accessible. Lastly, make sure you have the proper equipment and footwear.

Benefits of Walking

- 1 Keeps Weight in Check
- 2 Helps Regulate Blood Sugar
- 3 Promotes Better Digestion
- 4 Lowers Blood Pressure and Cholesterol
- 5 Enhances Your Mood
- 6 Get a Better Night's Rest
- 7 Gentle on the Joints
- 8 Prevents Varicose Veins

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Goal This Week:

Schedule a 30-minute walk into your daily routine. Need help? Read [Easy Ways to Fit in Exercise.](#)

Walk More and Sit Less.

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity each day to reduce cancer risk.



Eat The Rainbow

One of the simplest ways to eat healthier is to follow the rainbow. No, there likely won't be a pot of gold hidden at the end, but you're sure to find a cornucopia of colorful foods rich in beneficial phytonutrients. Research shows that phytonutrients can help reduce the risk of developing certain chronic diseases, cancers, and overall causes of mortality. To get a broad range of phytonutrients into your diet, focus on eating as many colors of the rainbow as you can.

Red

Red foods typically contain lycopene, a powerful antioxidant that can help prevent cell damage from swarming free radicals. Eating a variety of red foods, like apples, beets, strawberries, tomatoes, red peppers, and watermelon can also assist in reducing cholesterol and protecting against heart disease and different types of cancers.

Orange & Yellow

Foods displaying different shades of orange and yellow are often rich in carotenoids, a category of phytonutrients that includes beta-carotene and beta-cryptoxanthin, which are both linked to numerous health benefits, such as improved immunity function, vision, skin health, and bone strength. Pumpkins, squash, sweet potatoes, apricots, turmeric, carrots, and cantaloupes are all good sources of beta-carotene.

Green

There's a lot of green foods out there. Cruciferous vegetables, like broccoli, bok choy, and Brussels sprouts, contain glucosinolates, which have been linked to improved regulation of metabolic function, stress response, and antioxidant activities. Other green fruits and vegetables, like spinach, kale, kiwi, artichokes, and herbs, are loaded with cancer-preventing properties.

Purple

Fruits and vegetables that display different shades of purple, magenta, and red are often excellent sources of anthocyanins, a category of flavonoid associated with anti-diabetic, anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial effects. Foods high in anthocyanins include: strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, plums, pomegranates, red cabbage, purple cauliflower, and black beans.

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Color Matters for Cancer Prevention.

Choose a variety of plant foods for cancer protective vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals.



Goal This Week:

Eat foods from every color group throughout the week. Use this [tracking sheet](#) to stay on track.

Add “Extra Wellness” To Your Walk

Walking is a simple, yet beneficial form of physical activity that can improve your health and wellbeing in a number of ways. Besides helping with weight management, walking can also lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, improve digestion, and reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

But there are ways you can boost the benefits of walking even more.

With a few simple practices, you can upgrade your walk so that you are not only meeting your weekly physical activity goals, but managing stress levels and improving your strength and dexterity as well. Whether you're zipping through the hallways at work, on a lunch break, or taking a stroll around the neighborhood before breakfast, try adding a few of the practices below to get more out of your walk.

1 Practice mindfulness

When walking, practice the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique and use your five senses to focus on the moment as you move through your environment. This technique can help reduce stress and keep you calm.

2 Try arm circles

To improve your shoulder strength and range of motion, do some light arm circles as you walk. Just mind your surroundings when engaging in the practice to avoid injuring yourself or others.

3 Change up the way you walk

Try Heel-Toe walking to help improve balance and stability. You can also try quickening the speed of your walk for a great, low-impact form of physical activity.

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Goal This Week:

During one of your walks, try one of the 3 practices above for an extra boost. Repeat until it becomes a habit.

Reduce Your Cancer Risk:
Add Some “Extra Wellness” to Your Walk.

Stretch, meditate and relieve stress as you stroll.



Eat More Whole Grains

Whole grains such as brown rice, quinoa, farro, oatmeal, popcorn, millet, amaranth, and whole wheat are the key elements of a healthy diet. You can find that many every day foods including breads, tortillas, cereals, snacks, and other baked goods, are available in whole grain versions. Cooking with whole grains is quite similar to cooking refined grains, with the main difference being a longer cooking time.

By making small, gradual changes-like swapping white bread for whole grain bread or choosing brown rice over white rice-you can easily increase your intake of these nutrient-dense foods and reap their long-term health benefits such as the ones below.

1 Reduce Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

Whole grains are rich in soluble and insoluble fiber, which can help lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels, reducing the risk of heart disease. A study out of Harvard found that women who ate 2-3 servings of whole grains daily were 30% less likely to have a heart attack or die from heart disease over a ten-year period.

2 Promote Better Digestive Health

The fiber in whole grains supports a healthy digestive system, promotes regular bowel movements, and may reduce the risk of colon cancer.

3 Support Healthy Weight Management

Whole grains help with weight loss by promoting a feeling of fullness that isn't inherent in refined grains. Research shows that eating 3 servings per day leads to a lower risk of obesity.

4 Help Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

The complex array of nutrients, phytochemicals, and fiber contained in whole grains can improve insulin sensitivity and steady the absorption of food, which in turn can help prevent spikes in blood sugar.

**EATING 3 SERVINGS
(90G) OF WHOLE-GRAIN
FOODS PER DAY
REDUCES COLORECTAL
CANCER BY 17%.**

[**LEARN MORE**](#)

Goal This Week:

See where you can swap refined grains for whole and incorporate whole grains into at least two meals each day this week.

Go for the **WHOLE** Grain!

Eating 3 servings (90g) of whole-grain foods per day reduces colorectal cancer by 17%.

1 serving of a whole grain =



1 slice of 100% whole-grain bread



1/2 cup cooked brown rice



3 cups popped popcorn



6-inch corn tortilla

Habit-Stack For More Movement

What is habit-stacking? The idea behind habit stacking is simple: add a new behavior to your daily schedule by “stacking it” on top of an existing habit. It’s designed to help individuals incorporate more healthy behaviors into their lives without disrupting their normal routine. Incorporating more physical activity throughout the day can lead to weight loss and reduced instances of chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. Below are a few ideas to consider. By stacking enough of these habits, you’ll effectively incorporate a surprising amount of extra physical activity into your daily routine without even realizing it.

While Your Coffee’s Brewing



Run in Place: Use the 5-10 minutes it takes for your coffee to brew to do a quick aerobic workout, like running or marching in place to boost endurance, circulation and weight management.

While Working On Your Laptop



Stretch: While using your laptop, take a moment to stretch your chest and shoulders by locking your fingers behind your head, pushing your elbows back, and squeezing with your upper back until you feel a stretch, holding for 20-30 seconds and repeating.

While Brushing Your Teeth



Walk Around the House: Use the 4 minutes spent brushing your teeth each day to walk around the house, improving balance, flexibility, and range of motion, or make it more challenging by hiking up and down the stairs.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Increase Your Physical Activity by Stacking Your Habits.

Pair a simple workout with one of your daily rituals. Even a 10-minute walk through the day can add up for better health.



Goal This Week:

Think about one daily habit you have, whether it’s waiting for your food to heat up or watching tv, and stack a healthy habit on top of it, such as calf raises or arms circles. Try to keep it up throughout the week!

Swap Red and Processed Meat for Plant-Based Protein

Cutting back on red and processed meat can significantly reduce your risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. These meats are often high in saturated fat and processed with additives that may contribute to inflammation and other health concerns.

Fortunately, plant-based foods such as leafy greens, nuts, seeds, legumes, and whole grains provide ample protein and, when combined, can easily meet **daily nutritional needs**. Not only do these plant-based options offer similar protein benefits to animal products, but they can also be seamlessly incorporated into classic dishes and comfort foods. Check out four types of plant-based protein below.

Green Vegetables

One cup of cooked green vegetables, like spinach, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, and broccoli can contain anywhere from **3 to 6g of protein**, which can be a significant amount when paired with other ingredients, like grains, legumes, and plant-based meats.

Legumes

Legumes, like peas, lentils, black beans, and chickpeas are excellent (and inexpensive) sources of plant-based protein. One cup of cooked lentils contains **18g of protein and more than half your recommended daily value of fiber**.

Nuts & Seeds

Nuts and seeds like peanuts, almonds, chia, and flax provide over **5g of protein per quarter cup, along with fiber and healthy fats**, making them a great on-the-go snack or smoothie topping.

Whole Grains

Grains like oatmeal and quinoa offer **over 6g of protein per cooked cup** and pair well with protein-rich ingredients like beans, while their flavor can be enhanced with various seasonings and toppings.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Goal This Week:

Remember your Week 1 goal of adding more plant-based foods? This week, take it a step further—cut out red and processed meats and swap them for plant-based proteins instead!

Reduce Your Cancer Risk with Healthy Swaps for Red and Processed Meat.

There is strong evidence linking red and processed meat with higher risk of colorectal cancer.



Almonds



Black Beans



Chickpeas



Tofu



Edamame



Walnuts

Small Ways To Start Moving More

We're all busy, but finding time to move can truly transform your health! It's surprising how easy it is to go an entire day with barely any steps, but just adding small changes like walking, gardening, or taking the stairs can make a big impact on your health, reduce diabetes risk, and help manage weight. Let's kickstart your week with these simple ways to get more active!

TAKE A LAP AROUND THE HOUSE

Tidying up or walking from room to room is a simple way to add low-stress movement to your day.

TAKE A CLASS OUTDOORS

Learning a new outdoor skill, like photography, birdwatching, or gardening, can unexpectedly boost your daily steps.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Wearable fitness devices like the Apple Watch or Fitbit track steps, calories, heart rate, and sleep, keeping you motivated by monitoring your progress.

PARK FAR AWAY

May not seem like much, but those extra steps in and out of your workplace or grocery store do add up.

MOVE WITH MUSIC

Music is a powerful motivator. Put on a playlist — rock, jazz, POP...whatever gets you going, and let the tunes take over.

CHORES BUILD CORES

Cleaning your house engages muscles you don't often use, giving your body a good workout with some elbow grease.

Shake Up Your Routine.

Getting active doesn't have to be a workout—try a new activity and get to moving more!



LEARN MORE

Goal This Week:

This week, incorporate one of the simple activities above into each day to boost your movement and improve your health.

Staying Hydrated: How to Increase Your Water Intake

Although it may not receive the same level of attention as other healthy habits, **drinking enough water each day is essential to sustaining many of the body's key functions and promoting an overall state of wellness.** It prevents dehydration, which can cause headaches, dizziness, low blood pressure, and increase the risk of urinary tract infections and kidney stones. But water is responsible for so much more than just replenishing fluids. Proper water intake helps regulate body temperature, protect and lubricate joints, and control the flow of waste through urination and bowel movements. Water consumption needs to be a conscious and proactive effort, similar to engaging in daily exercise or eating a balanced diet. **How much water should a person drink a day?** The National Academy of Medicine recommends adult men drink 13 cups and women 9 cups of water daily, though individual needs vary. Staying committed to this goal is worth the effort for your health. See 5 ways to stay hydrated below.

1 Set a Daily Goal

This not only helps track your efforts, but also allows you to enjoy a sense of progress and accomplishment.

2 Set Reminders

Try setting reminders or alarms throughout the day to keep you on track.

3 Get a Water Bottle

Carry a reusable water bottle with you to work or school to help track how much you drink.

4 Skip Soda and Caffeine

When it comes to meal time, always opt for water instead of soda, alcohol, or coffee.

5 Make it Enjoyable

Don't be afraid to liven up your water by adding a wedge lemon or a splash of fruit juice.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Goal This Week:

Track your water intake to stay hydrated and support your health.

Start Monday with a
Healthy Dose of Hydration.

The best choice is always water!
For cancer prevention avoid alcohol.



Easy Ways to Eat More Healthy Foods

Personal wellness should be a top priority, and one of the best ways to maintain it is through smart food choices and better eating habits. This doesn't mean calorie counting or skipping dessert, but focusing on nutritious, plant-based foods while reducing reliance on meat and processed items. Healthy eating can be enjoyable, satisfying, and bring noticeable results quickly. Try out these tips below!

1 Swap in More Whole Grains

Whole grains like brown rice, quinoa, and whole wheat are rich in nutrients and fiber, helping to manage cholesterol, blood pressure, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, while easily replacing refined grains in a variety of meals.

2 Slow Down on Sugar

Natural sugars in whole foods are healthier than processed ones. Limit sugary snacks to avoid weight gain, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Try yogurt with berries, frozen banana "nice" cream, dates with peanut butter, or dark chocolate!

3 Try a Day of Plant-Based Eating

Cutting out meat one day a week boosts your nutrient intake with fiber-rich, plant-based foods while improving your health and reducing your carbon footprint.

4 Add Vegetables Whenever Possible






Vegetables are nutrient-dense, low-calorie, and high in fiber, making them filling additions to meals, whether roasted or added to stews, pastas, or casseroles. Can you eat the rainbow?

5 Prep Your Pantry

Many plant-based pantry staples like oats, canned beans, whole grains, and frozen vegetables can last for months and be combined into a variety of dishes, from vegetarian chili to spicy peanut noodles.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Tips to Eat More Plant Foods.

- Stock up on **canned beans** 
- Keep a variety of **whole grains** on hand (brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal, etc.) 
- Blend both **fruits and veggies** into your smoothies 
- Keep **frozen veggies** on hand 
- Follow AICR's **New American Plate Method** 

Goal This Week:

Challenge yourself to try all five of these healthy eating tips this week—whether it's cutting added sugars, going meat-free for a day, or swapping refined grains for whole grains!

Additional Resources

Congratulations on completing your 10-week cancer prevention program!

You've taken incredible steps toward a healthier life by moving more and eating healthier. Your commitment to these positive changes is inspiring and will have lasting benefits for your well-being. Keep up the amazing work! See additional resources below to help you stay on track.

HEALTHY
AGING

BOOST
YOUR
IMMUNITY

URGENT
SELF-CARE

WALK
YOUR WAY
TO BETTER
HEALTH

HEALTHY
MONDAY
RESOURCES

FIND A
PROGRAM