



Home economist Fay Strickler shows off the food that recent studies suggest may prevent some forms of cancer, heart disease, and strokes, and slow the aging process.

Diet May Prevent Cancer

LOU ANN GOOD

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LEESPORT (Berks Co.) —
Worried about cancer and old age?
Take heart.

Recent evidence suggests that you may reduce the risk of some forms of cancer, heart disease, strokes, and cataracts, as well as slow the aging process.

The secret lies in what you eat and don't eat.

To start with, Fay Strickler, home economist for the Berks County Extension, suggests you concentrate on eating a balanced diet with at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

Strickler researched recent research and the findings of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and planned a seminar on cancer prevention. The seminar was postponed and eventually cancelled because of subsequent snow storms, but Strickler shared her findings with Lancaster Farming since many readers are interested in health and nutrition.

"You can not say that eating this way will definitely prevent cancer but recent findings show that it may reduce the risk," Strickler said.

Humans need oxygen to live, but the side effects of the body's ongoing use of oxygen causes wear and tear on cells that can lead to cancer.

Evidence suggests that vitamins C and E, and beta carotene, a precursor of vitamin A, are antioxidants that permit repair of damaged cells to avert cancer development.

Dietary sources of antioxidants are as follows:

- Vitamin C — broccoli, citrus fruits and juices, red and green peppers, turnip greens, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kiwi fruit, strawberries, and cantaloupe.
- Vitamin E — brown rice, whole wheat, oats, yeast, and wheat germ.
- Beta-carotene — apricots, carrots, spinach, broccoli, kale, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, mustard greens, winter squash.
- Selenium — whole grains, brown rice, legumes, fish, liver.

If you have a choice, it is better to eat an orange or tangerine than to drink juice because eating provides fiber.

Fresh and frozen vegetables also contain higher nutrient quality than canned items.

"But if it's a choice between eating canned fruit and vegetables or not eating any, by all means eat the canned food," Fay said.

Research also seems to indicate that it is better to eat foods than take supplements to consume the same amount of vitamins and minerals. The American Cancer Society does not recommend supplements because they believe that as yet unidentified substance in fruits and vegetables may actually be responsible for reduced disease risk.

In a recent study reported by the American Heart Association, women who consumed high amounts of antioxidant-containing foods such as carrots and spinach had a 33 percent lower risk of heart attack and a 71 percent lower risk of stroke, than women who ate few antioxidant-containing foods. The study was based on 1,795 female nurses, each of whom had a history of heart attack, chest pain due to coronary disease or treatment for a blockage in a coronary artery. Those who consumed the most dietary antioxidants had the greatest disease reduction.

For those who are hesitant to make big changes in diet, Fay said, "You don't need to give up the foods you like, but choose more often the foods that may reduce your risks of cancer; choose less often the foods that might increase your risks of cancer."

Here are seven simple guidelines for a healthy diet.

- Eat a variety of foods.
- Maintain desirable weight.
- Avoid too much fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- Eat foods with adequate starch and fiber.
- Avoid too much sugar
- Avoid too much sodium.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

Here are some recommended recipes that may help reduce your risk of cancer and other diseases.

MOCK SAUSAGE PATTIES

1 pound ground turkey or chicken
¼ cup salt-free seasoned bread crumbs

2 tablespoons low-sodium chicken broth

2 tablespoons minced onion
1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley

1 teaspoon vegetable oil
¼ teaspoon ground sage
¼ teaspoon ground thyme
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

1 large egg white
In medium-size bowl, combine all ingredients except egg white, using hands, blend ingredients well. Gently beat egg white with a fork; add to mixture and incorporate with hands or large wooden spoon. Shape into 12 patties. Place on non-stick cookie sheet. Broil 3 to 4 inches from heat source 4 to 5 minutes or until light brown. Turn and broil additional 2 to 3 minutes or until cooked through. Makes 6 servings.

CARROT BREAD

1 cup sugar
¼ cup applesauce
1 cup whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup shredded raw carrots
1 teaspoon vanilla
¼ cup shelled walnuts
2 eggs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a loaf pan with butter and dust with flour. Mix sugar and applesauce in bowl. Combine dry ingredients and add to applesauce mixture. Add carrots, vanilla, and nuts. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Mix well. Pour into pan and bake for 50 minutes. Cool 10 minutes in pan, remove and cool on baking rack. Yield 16 slices with 116 calories and 2 grams fat per slice.

Substitutions: 1 cup shredded raw zucchini for carrots; add ¼ cup crushed, drained pineapple to batter.

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