



# **NUTRITION AND CANCER**

## **A COMMON SENSE APPROACH**

Research is on-going to better understand and explain the role of diet and nutrition in the development of cancer. While no direct cause-and-effect has been accurately determined, research clearly shows that certain foods may either increase, or may decrease the risk for developing certain types of cancer.

Scientific research also shows that we might decrease our risk of developing certain cancers by adopting the following:

### **1. Keep Within A Few Pounds Of Your Ideal Weight**

Individuals, who are 40% or more overweight, increase their risk of **colon, breast, prostate, gallbladder, ovary** and **uterine cancers**. If you are overweight you should visit your doctor or nearest Community Health Clinic, for a complete physical examination. Your doctor and/or nutritionist will recommend a suitable diet and exercise programme to help you achieve and maintain the proper weight based on your age, height and sex.

### **2. Cut Down On Total Fat Intake**

A diet that is high in fat, especially saturated fat, may be a factor in the development of certain cancers, particularly **breast, colon** and **prostate cancers**. In addition, by avoiding, or cutting down on fatty foods, we are better able to control our body weight.

### **3. Eat More High Fiber Foods Such As Whole Grain Cereals, Fruits And Vegetables**

It is strongly recommended that we increase our daily intake of cereal, fresh fruits and vegetables. Studies suggest that diets high in fiber may help to reduce the risk of **colon cancer**. Additionally, foods high in fiber content are a wholesome substitute for foods that are high in fat.

### **4. Include Foods Rich I Vitamins “A” And “C” In Your Diet**

We should include dark green and deep yellow fresh vegetables and fruits, such as spinach, carrots, yams, peaches and apricots in our daily meals. These are excellent sources of vitamin A; and oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, green and red



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peppers, are excellent sources of vitamin C. These foods may help lower the risk of developing cancers of the **larynx, oesophagus** and the **lung**.

**Please note:** The excessive use of vitamin A supplements is not recommended because of possible toxicity.

### **5. Include Cruciferous (Flowerlike) Vegetables In Your Diet**

Certain vegetables in the cruciferous family - e.g., cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower, may help to prevent certain types of cancers from developing. Research is on-going to determine precisely how these foods protect against cancer. “*Cruciferous*” vegetables have flowers with four leaves in the pattern of a cross.

### **6. Limit Your Intake Of Salt-Cured, Smoked and Nitrite-Cured Foods**

These foods include, but are not limited to: Salt pork, beef, fish and sausage (especially “*hard salty sausage*”), smoked ham, conch and fish, these foods may help increase the risk of developing cancers of the **oesophagus** and **stomach**.

### **7. Drink Alcohol Moderately Or Not At All**

Cut down, or cut out, the amount of alcohol that you drink. It is recommended that if you do drink, men should drink no more than two (2) alcoholic drinks each day – that is, no more than two (2) beers, or two (2) glasses of wine, or two (2) shots of “*hard*” liquor. It is also recommended that women drink no more than one (1) alcoholic beverage each day – that is, one (1) beer, or glass of wine, or shot of “*hard*” liquor. Excess drinking, especially when accompanied by any type of smoking, including the use of smokeless tobacco, has been shown to increase the risk of developing cancer of the **mouth, larynx, throat, oesophagus** and **liver**.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The National Dietary Guidelines of The Bahamas – “**The Drum**”, provides clear guidance on the types and sources of locally produced foods that are suitable and readily available for meeting our daily, healthy, nutritional needs.



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