



Quick *and* Easy Meals to Lower Cancer Risk

Leader's Guide

Scientific evidence supports the theory that many cancers may be linked to the food we eat. By making simple changes in the foods we choose and the proportions in which we eat them, we may reduce the risk of cancer. The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) has outlined the following recommendations for reducing the risk of developing cancer.

- Reduce the intake of dietary fat, both saturated and unsaturated, to a level of 30 percent of total calories, with the intake of saturated fat at no more than 10 percent of total calories.
- Increase the consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grain cereals. This includes high-fiber foods and fruits and vegetables high in vitamins A and C.
- Consume in moderation salt-cured, salt-pickled and smoked foods.
- Drink alcoholic beverages in moderation.

Eating healthy and putting together a quick and easy meal may seem impossible, but with a little creativity and know-how, it'll become a snap. It is not necessary to use special recipes in order to meet the above guidelines. Use your own favorite recipes but substitute ingredients such as whole grains or low-fat dairy products or change quantities and cooking techniques as

necessary. In addition, make-ahead casseroles or side dishes can be frozen and reheated for quick and easy meals.

Planning ahead is the first key to planning nutritious meals. The *Food Guide Pyramid* is a good place to start. Plan ahead by making double batches of bread, cookies, vegetables, casseroles, soup, stews and entrees, and freeze one batch for later. When combining make-ahead frozen dishes, follow these helpful hints for best results.

To prepare foods for freezing:

- * Freeze most casseroles before baking, especially when all the ingredients are already cooked. Exceptions are dishes that contain uncooked rice, raw vegetables or uncooked meat that has been frozen and thawed.
- * Some foods don't freeze well, such as hard-cooked eggs, raw vegetables, mayonnaise or sour cream
- * Undercook starchy ingredients such as potatoes, beans, rice and noodles as they become mushy.
- * Freeze casserole toppings separately to prevent sogginess.

- * Do not freeze baked pastry. Add the unbaked pastry during reheating.
- * Seasoning intensity can change during freezing—so season lightly. Adjust the flavor during reheating. Cloves, pepper, garlic and celery become stronger upon freezing. Onion, salt and chili powder weaken.
- * Freeze casseroles in containers that are just right for a family meal or individual servings.

To freeze:

- * Cool hot casseroles rapidly. To cool to room temperature quickly, set shallow pan of hot food in ice water. Wrap, label and freeze.
- * Shallow baking pans speed freezing and thawing of casseroles.
- * To package food for the freezer, use heavy-duty foil, moisture- and vapor-proof paper, plastic freezer wraps or freezer containers. Microwave-safe or aluminum ovenproof containers are also available. Pack the containers nearly full to prevent ice crystals from forming—but allow some space at the top of the container for expansion. Label the contents of the dish, the date frozen and the weight or number of servings. Include cooking instructions or where to locate the recipe.
- * To free-up your baking pans, line them with heavy-duty aluminum foil. Leave enough overhang all around the pan to cover casserole and seal foil. Add ingredients and bake. Cool, cover and seal airtight. When frozen, remove the foil from the pan and place the foil package in the freezer. To reheat, simply peel foil from food, place back in the original baking pan and bake as directed.

To serve:

- For best quality, use frozen casseroles within three months.

- The size of the casserole will affect baking time. To reduce baking time, use shallow, small dishes instead of deeper, larger dishes.
- To reheat casseroles without thawing, bake, uncovered, at 400°F till heated through for one to two hours. Fully cooked casseroles should not be thawed but baked at 400°F for the maximum time given in the recipe.
- To thaw casseroles before reheating, allow the casserole to stand in the refrigerator overnight. Then cook as directed in the recipe, adding 15 to 30 minutes to the time.

Now let's see how we can help you to **reduce cancer risk** through balanced nutrition while enjoying tasty and satisfying food.

Consumption of foods high in *beta-carotene* (which is converted to vitamin A after consumption) and *vitamin C* has been associated with lower rates of some cancers. Generally, certain fruits and vegetables are the best sources of these nutrients. These fruits and vegetables are also good sources of dietary fiber. Eating them raw or cooking quickly by steaming or stir-frying retains their crispness, flavor, color and nutrients.

The best sources of *beta-carotene* are dark green and deep yellow fruits and vegetables—including apricots, cantaloupe, nectarines, papayas, watermelon, broccoli, carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash and all dark leafy vegetables (such as spinach and chard). *Vitamin C*-rich foods include cantaloupe, kiwi, citrus fruits and their juices, strawberries, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collard and turnip greens, peppers and tomato juice.

Whole grains are higher in several vitamins and minerals, as well as dietary fiber, than are enriched or refined grains. Whole grains are a good source of vitamin E and dietary fiber—both of which has been associated with decreased risk of cancer. The current

recommendation for fiber intake is 20–35 grams per day. It is best to gradually increase fiber intake.

Phytochemicals, which are chemicals found in plants that although they are not true nutrients, may act as cancer-fighting substances. Grains, fruits, including citrus, Brassica and Allium vegetables as well as soyfoods and legumes contain a variety of phytochemicals.

References

- Famularo, J & Imperiale, L. 1993. *Vegetables: Artichokes to Zucchini*, Barrons, New York, NY.
- Kentucky Soybean Board. 1997. *Soyfoods: A Healthy Profile*.
- AICR Information Series. 1989. *Menus and Recipes to Lower Cancer Risk*

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Recipes:
Quick and Easy Meals to Lower Cancer Risk

Winter Squash with Lemon Chicken

This all in one meal is low in fat and high in vitamins A and C, as well as high in dietary fiber.

Yield: 8 servings

1½ lb skinned and boned chicken breast, cut into 1¼ x ¼-inch pieces	1 Tbsp cornstarch
4 winter squash (acorn or other), cut in half, remove seeds	2 tsp sugar
¼ cup chicken broth	⅓ cup scallions, thinly sliced
¼ cup lemon juice	2 Tbsp fresh ginger, minced
3 Tbsp lite soy sauce	2 tsp garlic, minced
	2 Tbsp vegetable oil
	3 cups frozen peas, thawed

Steam winter squash until tender, about 15 minutes. Allow to cool and hollow out shells using a melon baller. Reserve squash shells and squash balls. In a bowl, combine broth, lemon juice, soy sauce, cornstarch and sugar. In a wok or large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add scallions, ginger and garlic and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add squash balls and continue cooking 3 minutes. Add chicken and peas. Stir broth mixture, add to pan and cook 3 minutes or until the chicken is done. Divide the mixture among the squash shells.

Nutritional Analysis: 273 Calories, 25g protein, 34g carbohydrate, 6g fiber, 5g fat, 49mg cholesterol, 337mg sodium, 25% DV vitamin A, 60% DV vitamin C.

Tofu Lasagna

Soyfoods are an excellent source of high-quality protein, rich in calcium, iron, zinc, several B-vitamins and fiber. They also contain phytochemicals that may reduce your risk for disease. *This filling can also be used to stuff calzone, manicotti or large pasta shells and freezes quite well.*

Yield: 9 servings

8 oz mushrooms, chopped	¼ tsp black pepper
1½ cups zucchini, chopped	¾ cup water
16 oz tofu	4 cups fat-free marinara sauce
1 Tbsp lemon juice	8 oz lasagna noodles, uncooked
1 Tbsp dried parsley flakes	4 oz Mozzarella-style soy cheese, grated
1 tsp Italian herb seasoning	¼ cup Parmesan-style soy cheese

Saute mushrooms and zucchini in a nonstick skillet until tender. Mash the tofu in a small mixing bowl. Add the lemon juice, parsley, herb seasoning and pepper. Mix well. Combine the water and marinara sauce. To assemble the lasagna, place ⅓ of the sauce in the bottom of a 9" x 13" baking dish. Top with half the uncooked noodles, half the tofu mixture, half the Mozzarella-style soy cheese and all the mushroom and zucchini mixture. Repeat and top with remaining sauce and cheeses. Cover with foil and bake at 350°F for one hour. Allow to sit 10-15 minutes for easier serving.

Nutritional Analysis: 241 Calories, 15g protein, 32g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 7g fat, 493mg sodium.

Tabouli with Shrimp

Tabouli is a Mid-Eastern dish of bulgur wheat mixed with vegetables. This dish is high in fiber and provides a high percentage of the Daily Values for vitamins A and C. Add your choice of vegetables and change the proportions of bulgur and garbanzo beans to suit personal preferences.

Yield: 6 servings

1 lb shrimp, steamed	3 medium tomatoes, chopped
1 cup dry bulgur	¼ cup carrots, grated
1 cup cooked garbanzo beans	¼ cup green or red pepper, chopped
2 cups fresh parsley, minced	½ cup lemon juice
½ cup scallions	¼ cup olive oil
1 tsp crushed garlic	Salt and pepper to taste

Combine bulgur with 1½ cups boiling water in a bowl. Cover and let stand 30-60 minutes, or until the grains are firm but are no longer hard in the center. If necessary, shake in a strainer and squeeze to remove extra water. Mix bulgur with remaining ingredients and chill for at least 1 hour.

Nutritional Analysis: 288 Calories, 18g protein, 32g carbohydrate, 9g fiber, 11g fat, 108mg cholesterol, 290mg sodium, 60% DV vitamin A, 90% DV vitamin C.

Cauliflower Cornucopia

This delectably beautiful arrangement of vegetables can stand alone as a meal or make smaller servings and use as a side dish. It will last several days in the refrigerator if covered. The olive oil and salt can be reduced in the dressing to reduce the fat and sodium content. This dish is high in vitamins A and C and dietary fiber.

Yield: 8 servings

1 large cauliflower (at least 3 pounds), with green leaves attached	¾ cup black olives, sliced
2 cups carrots, sliced	½ cup green onion, sliced
2 cups Brussels sprouts, trimmed	1 cup fresh snow peas, cut in half
10 red radishes, stemmed and thinly sliced	⅓ cup fresh parsley, finely chopped

Dressing

Yield: 1 cup

2 garlic cloves, halved	pepper to taste
¼ cup white wine vinegar	2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
⅔ cup olive oil	1 Tbsp fresh oregano, chopped OR 1 tsp dried
2 tsp salt	

Combine all ingredients of dressing and allow to stand in the refrigerator covered overnight. Remove garlic before service. Wash cauliflower and slice bottom end of core to allow shell to sit upright. Remove 2 cups of florets from the center, cutting into 1½-inch pieces. Keep leaves intact so cauliflower maintains its shape. Remove as much core as possible. Immerse shell in ice water, covered in the refrigerator. Steam carrots, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower florets until tender, about 7 minutes. Drain well. Combine all ingredients, including dressing about 1-2 hours before serving and refrigerate covered. Serve at room temperature in cauliflower shell.

Nutritional Analysis: 250 calories, 5g protein, 14g carbohydrate, 7g fiber, 21g fat, 1020mg sodium, 110% DV vitamin A, 170% DV vitamin C.