

CANCER PATIENTS & COVID-19

Nutrition for the pandemic

June 2020

Nutrition to Support Your Immune System

Free radicals are highly reactive molecules produced by the body as a result of metabolic processes and to fight infections. Free radicals can trigger inflammation and accelerate aging. Eating foods that combat free radicals will give your immune system the support it needs to stay strong.

Plant Power

Eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains will supply your body with a variety of nutrients and natural phytochemicals. These phytochemicals can act as antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agents in the body.

Fiber

A healthy gut can also impact your immune system. Microbes in your gut utilize fiber to produce short-chain fatty acids within the colon and provide anti-inflammatory protection. Examples provided below.

Nutrient-Dense Foods

In order to provide the wide range of nutrients needed to support your immune system, focus on filling the majority of your plate with nutrient dense foods. This includes (but is not limited to) minerals such as zinc, selenium, iron, copper, essential fatty acids, and protein.

Food Safety

Cancer and some cancer treatments can weaken your immune system and increase your risk for infection when you are exposed to germs from food or other sources. If you have been told you have a low white blood cell count or neutropenia (low neutrophil count), take extra care to follow these tips for safe food handling.

1. Clean

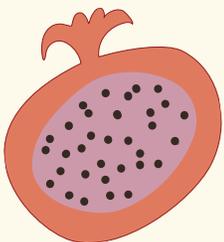
Ensure hands, food, surface area, and utensils are washed before use.

- Wash hands frequently with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Dry hands with a clean towel.
- Clean surfaces that you come into contact with. Use anti-bacterial cleansers to clean floors, tables and counter tops.
- Wash forks, knives, spoons, cutting boards, and dishes with hot soapy water before and after each use.
- Thoroughly wash fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.

2. Separate

Keep raw foods separate from cooked foods to prevent germs from spreading.

- Use one cutting board for raw meat, fish, and poultry and another for fresh produce or items that will not be cooked before they are eaten.
- Wash the cutting board with hot soapy water and rinse well. Then sanitize with a solution of 1 tablespoon bleach and 1 gallon of water. Let it stand for several minutes.
- While shopping, separate raw meat, seafood, eggs, and poultry from other items in your cart. At checkout, place raw meat, seafood, and poultry in separate bags to prevent contamination.
- Store raw meat, fish, and poultry at the bottom of the fridge in sealed plastic bags.





Food Safety

3. Cook

Cook food to the proper temperature to kill harmful germs.

- Only eat well cooked meat, poultry, and fish.
- Use a food thermometer in the thickest part of the food item avoiding bone, fat, or gristle.
- Hold hot food at 140°F or above after cooking to keep it out of the temperature danger zone.
- Microwave food thoroughly to 165°F or above.
- Read and follow package directions for commercially prepared frozen foods.

4. Chill

Refrigerate and freeze foods properly.

- Harmful bacteria multiply the fastest between 40°F and 140°F. This is known as the temperature danger zone.
- Keep your refrigerator at 40°F and your Freezer at 0°F.
- Thaw or marinate meat, seafood, and poultry in the refrigerator or microwave. Do not thaw foods at room temperature or in water. Cook foods immediately after thawing.
- Refrigerate leftover food within 2 hours of cooking.
- Discard leftovers if they are not eaten within 24 hours.

Shopping Tips

- Use sanitizer wipes to clean your cart or basket before shopping
- Go to the store less often to reduce contact.
- Practice physical distancing when you are out on public. Keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other people.
- Avoid self-check-out stations that are used by many people. Go to a cashier instead to limit exposure to different surfaces.
- Check the “use by” or “best by” date on packages. Do not buy or use foods that are past these dates.
- Do not buy or use cans of food that are dented, bulging, rusted, or leaking.
- Avoid buying foods from self-serve bulk containers or bins. You cannot guarantee the cleanliness or age of these foods.
- Buy cold foods last and get them to your refrigerator or freezer as soon as possible.



Safe Minimum Internal Cooking Temperatures

• Beef, pork, veal, and lamb	145°F
• Ground meats	160°F
• Poultry (whole, parts, or ground)	165°F
• Eggs and egg dishes	160°F
• Leftovers	165°F
• Fin fish	145°F

Guidelines for Cooking Seafood

- Shrimp, lobster, crabs- Flesh pearly & opaque
- Clams, oysters, mussels- Shells open during cooking
- Scallops- Milky white, opaque and firm

Keep Yourself and Others Safe

COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person. Since there is currently no vaccine, the best way to prevent the illness is by avoiding exposure to it. Methods to reduce exposure are outlined below.

Clean Hands

- Wash your hands with soap often- for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cover Mouth & Nose Around Others

- Wear a cloth or face mask out in public.
- Cover coughs and sneezes when you are not wearing a mask. Wash your hands immediately after.

Clean and Disinfect

- Use detergent or soap on frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, tables, light switches, desk, toilets, and faucets.
- After cleaning, sanitize by using a household disinfectant.

Avoid Close Contact

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not come into contact with other people who are sick.



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