

# Health & Fitness • Health & Fitness

## 10 ways to prevent cancer

In 1997, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) released 14 dietary recommendations intended to reduce global cancer incidence and mortality. A subsequent study condensed the 14 original recommendations into 10 that the authors deemed particularly relevant to Western populations, and then evaluated their impact on a cohort of 29,564 women (55-69 years old) with regard to cancer incidence, cancer mortality, and total mortality.

No study participant had a prior history of cancer in 1986, when the study began. At follow-up in 1998, the women in the test group who had followed zero to one of the AICR recommendations were statistically proven to be more likely to have cancer than those who implemented six or more of the recommendations.

Here are the 10 AICR recommendations that are most relevant:

**Food supply/eating habits:** Consume a plant-based diet; minimize starchy foods.

**Vegetable and fruit intake:** Eat five or more servings of fruits/vegetables per day (excluding starchy vegetables).

**Consumption of other plant foods:** Eat seven or more daily portions of a variety of cereals, roots, tubers, plantains, etc.; minimize intake of processed foods and refined sugars.

**Alcohol consumption:** Alcohol intake is discouraged; if at all, limit to less than one drink per day.

**Meat consumption:** If consumed at all, limit to 3 ounces daily

**Total fats and oils:** Limit consumption of fatty foods; use mod-

erate amounts of appropriate vegetable oils when necessary.

**Salt and salting:** Limit consumption of salted foods and use of cooking/table salt; use herbs and spices as alternate seasoning options.

**Food storage:** Do not eat food subject to contamination due to long storage at ambient temperatures. Preserve perishable food appropriately via refrigeration, freezing, etc.

**Additives and residues:** Minimize levels of additives, contaminants and other residues in food sources.

**Food preparation:** Consume grilled or broiled meat and fish occasionally, avoiding burning of meat juices and charring.

Let's remember that cancer is the abnormal development of cells that begins with either a genetic predisposition, or from an

environmental issue that we may be able to control. The genetic predisposition we cannot do anything about since we cannot choose different parents, but we do have great control over the 10 recommendations listed above. The chronic diseases killing the majority of Americans (greater than 80 percent) are heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. All of these can have a genetic origin, but these three diseases can be fended off by the choices we make in our daily lives such as the buying and preparation of the foods we eat.

Cancer is killing over 25 percent of all Americans. Try implementing some easy and cost-effective changes in your lives to prevent it.

For more information on the study, please see "Adherence to the AICR cancer prevention rec-

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ommendations and subsequent morbidity and mortality in the Iowa Women's Health Study cohort," *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, July 2004. Cerhan JR, Potter JD, Gilmore JME, et al.

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