

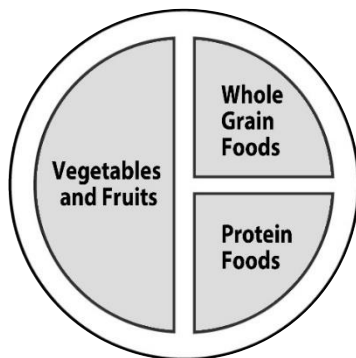
Nutrition and Breast Cancer

Healthy food and lifestyle choices help to support your breast cancer treatment. They may:

- improve your overall health
- reduce your risk for heart disease
- lower your risk of osteoporosis
- help lower the risk of breast cancer returning

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

Follow the Eat Well Plate



Eat plenty of plant foods

Plant foods include:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Whole grain foods like brown rice, quinoa, bulgur, whole grain breads and cereals
- Protein foods like beans, split peas, lentils, nuts, and seeds



Plant foods contain healthy compounds called phytonutrients and antioxidants (such as vitamin E, carotenoids, and some B vitamins).

Many of these compounds may help decrease the risk or the progress of breast cancer. These compounds work better when eaten as food instead of pills.

Plant foods contain fibre. Fibre is the part of plants that our bodies cannot fully digest and absorb. Fibre has many benefits for your digestive system, heart, and overall health.

Include protein foods at each meal

Protein can help you maintain muscle, fight fatigue, heal, and help you feel better during and after treatment.

- Choose protein foods from plants more often: beans, split peas, lentils, nuts, and seeds.
- Fish, poultry, and eggs are also good choices.
- Choose lower fat milk and dairy products, and leaner meats and poultry.
- Limit red meat (such as beef, pork, or lamb) to less than 18 ounces per week.
- Avoid processed meats and charred meats.



Choose healthy fats

Omega-3 fats are healthy fats. Foods with omega-3 fats include:

- Fatty fish (Arctic char, salmon, trout, sardines)
- Walnuts, flax seed, soybean products
- Foods fortified with omega-3 fats (eggs, milk, and yogurt)



Other healthy fats include:

- Nuts, seeds, and avocados
- Healthy oils like olive, canola, safflower, sunflower, and peanut

Limit unhealthy fats

Limit foods high in saturated fats, such as:

- deep fried foods
- fatty meats
- hard margarines
- high fat dairy products
- high fat baked goods
- highly processed foods
- shortening
- tropical oils, such as palm or coconut oil

Get enough calcium and vitamin D each day

Some cancer treatments may increase your risk of osteoporosis. Calcium and vitamin D help build strong, healthy bones.

Calcium

Age	Daily amount from food and supplements
19–50 years	1000 mg
Over 50 years	1200 mg

Try to meet your calcium needs through food first.

To see how much calcium you get from food each day, use the [Calcium Calculator from Osteoporosis Canada](#).

If you're unable to get enough calcium from food, you may need a supplement. Talk to your dietitian or doctor before starting a supplement.

Vitamin D

Alberta Health Services recommends that everyone take a vitamin D supplement year-round.

Each day, take 1000 IU vitamin D or the amount recommended by your healthcare team.

Weight management

During treatment it's best not to gain or lose too much weight.

After treatment, reaching and staying at a healthy weight may help reduce risk of cancer returning.

A healthy lifestyle includes:

- healthy eating
- regular exercise
- other factors like getting enough sleep and reducing stress

Talk to your dietitian and doctor or visit ahs.ca/Nutrition for programs in your area.



If you develop nausea and vomiting or are losing weight without trying, contact your healthcare team.

It's safe to eat soy foods and flax seeds in moderation

Soy foods and flax seeds contain compounds called phytoestrogens. These compounds are similar to estrogen found in the body, but do not act the same.

Soy foods and flax seeds have not been found to increase the risk of breast cancer returning.

Eat up to 3 servings of soy foods per day.

Examples of 1 serving of soy foods:

- fortified soy beverage (1 cup/ 250 mL)
- edamame (¾ cup/ 175 mL)
- soy nuts (¼ cup/ 60 mL)
- tofu (½ cup/ 125 mL)



You can eat up to 2 Tbsp (30 mL) of ground flaxseed each day.



Avoid supplements with high amounts of phytoestrogens.

This includes soy powders, some flaxseed oil supplements, supplements with red clover, and isoflavone supplements.

Limit alcohol

Alcohol can increase the risk of breast cancer returning. If you consume alcohol, less is best.

Talk with your healthcare team about the risks.

More support



- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on ahs.ca/811.
- Visit ahs.ca/Nutrition.