



# Is There a Prostate Cancer Diet?

WebMD expert and urologist Sheldon Marks, MD, shares his thought on how men can help prevent prostate cancer through nutrition.

Medically Reviewed by [Paul O'Neill, MD](#) on December 01, 2006

FROM THE WEBMD ARCHIVES 

When you're being treated for cancer, it's more important than ever to eat right and get adequate nutrition -- but it can also be more difficult than ever to adhere to a balanced [cancer diet](#).

Your body is working overtime to fight the [cancer](#), while it's also doing extra

duty to repair healthy cells that may have been damaged as a side effect of treatments like [chemotherapy](#) and [radiation](#). At the same time, many [cancer](#) treatments -- especially chemotherapy -- come with side effects that drain your strength and sap your appetite. So how can you make sure you're getting all the essential nutrients, [vitamins](#), and minerals you need to keep a balanced cancer diet?

1. Participate in **regular exercise**.

Walking is best.

2. **Limit your calorie intake.**

Excess calories are bad for cancer growth. Eat what you need to get to the next meal, not the usual American style of eating all you can as if you are never going to eat again.

3. **Get sunshine daily.** Darker-skinned people need more sunshine.

4. **Don't follow these or any guidelines to excess.**

Moderation is the key.

5. **Heart healthy is prostate healthy.** Heart disease is still the No. 1 killer, even in men with prostate cancer.
6. **Variety in the foods you eat is important.** Increase the diversity.
7. **Remember supplements are supplements.** They are not intended to replace an intelligent diet; their purpose is to supplement an intelligent diet. Supplements are a poor alternative to eating foods that are high in the desired **nutrients**.
8. **See a doctor regularly for early detection and preventative care.** Be proactive rather than reactive.

## Nutritional Recommendations

The two diets known to be associated with **longevity** and reduced **risks for prostate cancer** are the traditional Japanese diet and a Southern **Mediterranean diet**. The Japanese diet is high in **green tea**, soy, vegetables, and fish, as well as low in calories and

fat. The [Mediterranean diet](#) is high in fresh [fruits and vegetables](#), garlic, tomatoes, red wine, olive oil, and fish. Both are low in red meat.

Specifically, you should incorporate these principles when reevaluating your daily diet:

1. Reduce animal fat in your diet. Studies show that excess fat, primarily red meat and high-fat dairy, stimulates [prostate cancer](#) to grow.
2. Avoid trans fatty acids, which are known to promote cancer growth. These are high in margarines, and fried and baked foods.
3. Increase your fresh fish intake, which is high in the very beneficial alpha omega-3 fatty acids. Ideally eat cold-water fish such as salmon, sardines, mackerel, and trout, at least two to three times a week. The fish should be poached, baked, or grilled (not burned or charred). Avoid fried fish.
4. Significantly increase your fresh fruit, herb, and vegetable

consumption daily. Powerful anticancer nutrients are being discovered regularly in colorful [fruits and vegetables](#), fresh herbs, leafy green vegetables, nuts, berries, and seeds.

5. Avoid high-[calcium](#) diets, which have been shown to stimulate prostate cancer growth.
6. Take a multivitamin with B complex and [folic acid](#) daily.
7. Avoid high-dose zinc supplements.
8. Increase your natural [vitamin C](#) consumption -- this includes citrus, berries, spinach, cantaloupe, sweet peppers, and mango.
9. Drink [green tea](#) several times each week.
10. Avoid excess preserved, pickled, or salted foods.
11. Eat red grapes, drink red grape juice, or red wine regularly.
12. Eat leafy dark-green vegetables frequently.
13. Cruciferous vegetables are cancer protective. These include

cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower.

14. Tomatoes and especially tomato products are very high in lycopene, a powerful anticancer substance. This includes pizza sauce, tomato paste, and ketchup.
15. **Avoid** flax seed oil. This can stimulate prostate cancer to grow. You can obtain the very healthy alpha omega-3 fatty acids you need through fresh fish and nuts.
16. Use olive oil, which is very healthy and rich in [vitamin E](#) and [antioxidants](#). Avocado oil is also good. Avoid oils high in polyunsaturated fats such as corn, canola, or soybean.
17. Take vitamin E, 50 to 100 IU of gamma and d-alpha, *only with the approval of your doctor*. Some recent studies have raised concerns over serious risks with vitamin E intake. Natural sources include nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocado oil, wheat germ, peas, and nonfat milk.
18. [Selenium](#) is a very powerful

antioxidant and the backbone molecule of your body's immune system. Most studies support a daily selenium supplement of 200 micrograms a day. The benefits appear to be only for those who have low selenium levels, which is difficult and expensive to measure. Since it only costs about 7 cents a day and is not toxic at these levels, it is reasonable for all men to take selenium. Natural sources include Brazil nuts, fresh fish, grains, mushrooms, wheat germ, bran, whole-wheat bread, oats, and brown rice.

WebMD Commentary

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