



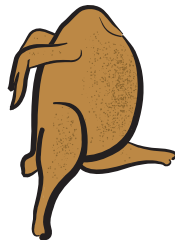
## Anti-Acne Eating

### Research Update

Your parents always told you that eating a lot of candy would give you pimples, but there is actually growing scientific evidence that what you eat can influence the presence of acne. Specifically, eating a diet high in refined carbohydrates and sugars, known as a high-glycemic load diet, can increase pimples in those who are acne-prone.

Researchers have found that eating a diet that substitutes whole, intact, minimally processed grains for highly processed carbohydrates, which is called a low-glycemic load diet, can help decrease the number of acne-related pimples as well as the severity of the acne because it improves insulin sensitivity. Eating a lot of sugar and highly processed carbs, on the other hand, raises blood sugar rapidly, which in turn requires the secretion of a lot of insulin and other hormones that may stimulate acne production.

High glycemic carbohydrates include sodas and other sweet beverages, sugar, flour, most bread, cookies, crackers, cakes, tortillas, white rice and mature potatoes. Low glycemic carbohydrates are brown rice, oats, flourless whole-grain bread, barley, quinoa, vegetables and most fruit. Always pair carbohydrates with some lean protein and healthy fats to help control blood sugar further.



# Damage Control

It happened again: you promised yourself that you wouldn't overeat at the holiday party and you went ahead and did it anyway—BIG time.

What should you do?

- A) Go home and raid the refrigerator—you've already blown your diet so you may as well binge.
- B) Go directly to the gym and sweat it off on the treadmill for the next three hours.
- C) Fast all day tomorrow since you probably ate about two days' worth of food.
- D) None of the above.

If you answered D, then you are correct, but don't laugh off the other options since they are the most common responses to this exact situation. A lot of people view eating in black and white, categorizing foods and dietary practices as either good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, right or wrong. When there are no shades of gray, extreme behaviors like options A) through C) are common, but neither giving up nor overcompensating are the best ways to deal with dietary damage. There are many productive and positive ways to manage any situation, barrier, or saboteur that may jeopardize the success of your healthful eating or weight-maintenance plans this holiday season.

I've probably told you this before, but it is worth repeating: the holidays are not a good time to lose weight, but they are a great time to practice maintaining your weight. If you lost weight in September and October and even the first part of November, then good for you! I don't want to discourage your efforts, but I also don't want you to feel disappointed. Trying to eat perfectly on a holiday or at a party is setting yourself up for failure. The only way to eat perfectly is to stay home, but that's impractical. When you eat healthfully, it's important to understand the 90-10 principle: you should eat well 90% of the time so that the other 10% of the time you can eat what you love during holidays and at parties. Perhaps November and December are more like 80-20 months—but that's okay! I'm not giving you permission to gain weight, but I am encouraging you to enjoy your food without going overboard. This seems like a very thin line to tread, but it can be done. I think that



continued...

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*Damage Control continued...*

the key to indulging without over indulging is to go to your parties with a plan.

There is more than one good plan for dealing with holiday eating. I'll make several suggestions and allow you to decide what will work best for you:

- Weigh yourself daily or every couple of days to make sure that your 10 or 20% of fun does not turn into 30 or 40% of recklessness.

- Identify and control your emotional eating if holiday stress creeps up on you. Refocus your energy away from eating and onto other productive and healthful activities, such as walking or yoga.

- Although food is part of the holiday experience, the people and the social interactions are what will make the holidays memorable. Put your energy into visiting with friends and family instead of checking out the dessert buffet.

- Plan get-togethers with friends around activities instead of meals. Gift-wrapping parties, exercise classes, spa days and volunteering at soup kitchens or nursing homes are great ways to spend quality time with friends without packing on the pounds.

- Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner every day, even if your previous meal was huge. Skipping meals is not a way to compensate for eating too much and actually sets you up for overeating again. Breakfast is especially important, because it influences the healthfulness of your food choices for the rest of the day.

- Try to stick to your normal pattern of healthful eating so that you will feel nourished and satisfied at most meals. Maintaining your good eating habits on a daily basis means you will not be as tempted to eat with abandon when you're at the holiday dining table.

- Have a healthy snack before you leave for a party so that you won't arrive there starving. Otherwise, extreme hunger could force you to throw your healthy strategies out the window and drive you to eat every morsel of food in sight, regardless of how unhealthy it is.

- Only allow yourself to indulge once a day. If you are invited to two parties in one day, either sit one out or eat a healthy meal before you go so that you won't eat while you are there.

- If you're at a buffet meal, strictly enforce the "one plate rule." Basically, you're only allowed to eat as much as you can fit on one plate and you can't go back for seconds. If you're not sure what's good, don't be the first in line. Wait a little bit, survey the spread, ask someone who's already started eating what's good, and then grab a plate.

- Wake up a few minutes earlier and go for a brisk walk or do an exercise video at home. If you get your activity out of the way first thing in the morning, you won't have to make excuses in order to avoid it later in the day.



**Food is part of the holiday experience, but personal interactions make the holidays memorable.**

- Use exercise to keep yourself healthy and grounded, not as a way to purge the extra calories you've eaten. Instead of spending hours at the gym a couple of days a week, keep your exercise moderate and regular—you're more likely to stick with it throughout the season.

- Beware of caloric beverages since those calories add up fast. Try to drink mostly water and, when you do drink, try to choose the lower calorie options. Alcoholic drinks with the fewest calories are wine, beer, mimosas and Bloody Marys.

- When you're at a party, be sure to have a glass of sparkling or flat water in your hand from the very beginning—how much can you eat if you only have one free hand?

- Choose your "poison" before the party: alcohol, bread/stuffing or dessert. Allow yourself one of the three, but not all of them.

- If you're preparing a holiday dinner, make sure there are lots of vegetable dishes to choose from. If you're a guest at a dinner, try to bring a salad or vegetable dish that you know is light and healthy. Nothing is lower in calories or more nutrient-dense than vegetables, so fill up on them to eat less of the high-calorie stuff.

Successful damage control entails being proactive now to prevent regret later on. If you go into the season with a good weight maintenance plan, you should feel strong and prepared, not deprived and lost. Whatever you do, remember to have fun and connect with people. This month you'll probably find yourself in a situation where you can't employ any of your carefully planned strategies. When that happens, employ the strategy of moderation. Eat what you like, but eat it in moderation—and enjoy every bite!

*Our registered dietitian has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are general in nature and not tailored to specific health problems. Talk to your physician or other qualified health care practitioners concerning particular health issues or before beginning any nutritional program.*

# Diet and Cancer Update

If you ask people what their #1 health fear is, about 40% will state that it's cancer. Although heart disease affects many more people than cancer does, cancer seems much scarier and more uncontrollable to most people. The American Institute of Cancer Research (AICR) understands our fears and has recently published a report by an expert panel of health researchers to let us know that many risk factors for cancer are in fact under our control. They published eight recommendations that we can incorporate into our lifestyles to help us reduce our cancer risk:

## 1. Be as lean as possible within the normal range of body weight.

This is the panel's first recommendation because it is also the most important thing we can do to reduce our cancer risk. Excess body fat is a risk factor for six types of cancer: breast, colon, kidney, pancreatic, esophageal and uterine. Losing weight can reduce those risks, but preventing weight gain and waist size expansion are extremely important for warding off cancer. Excess fat around the waist causes low-grade inflammation, which can promote the development of cancer. Even if you can't lose weight, you can and should stop weight gain by incorporating some of the next few recommendations into your lifestyle.

## 2. Be physically active as part of everyday life.

The panel recommends that we be active for at least 30 minutes each day. Being sedentary (aka a "desk jockey" or a "couch potato") is a risk factor for cancer, but regular physical activity can lower that risk. Moderate to vigorous exercise is what is most strongly recommended for cancer prevention. That means 30 to 60 minutes of dedicated activity. Your everyday activities, though they may be brisk, do not count toward that time goal. As opposed to food, more is better when it comes to exercise. Moderate exercise options include golfing, walking, dancing, skating and bike riding, while more vigorous options are running or jogging, aerobics, racquetball, soccer, swimming and weight training. Whichever level you choose, you still need to do at least 30 minutes each day. If you are currently sedentary, talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program of any type or level.

## 3. Limit consumption of energy-dense foods and sugary beverages.

Energy-dense foods are foods that are high in calories and low in nutrients—it's a polite way of describing junk food. Examples of energy-dense foods include cookies, chips, deep-fried foods, fast food, most snack foods and soft drinks. Highly processed foods promote weight gain (a significant risk for cancer) by providing lots of unsatisfying empty calories that displace other healthful foods in our diet. Junk foods are often loaded with sugar, which fuels the growth of certain types of tumors, and they are also low in cancer-fighting fiber. Cutting out soft drinks and sweetened beverages is a good place to start making changes. After that, start replacing your junk food with more nutritious, less processed foods. Check out my Master Shopping List at your local Gelson's for my recommendations.

## 4. Eat mostly foods of plant origin.

People who eat a mostly plant-based diet that is high in vegetables, fruit, legumes/beans and whole grains have a lower risk for certain cancers. The panel recommends that at least two-thirds of every meal be composed of plant-based foods. These foods are nutrient-dense and have very few calories, so they contribute to a healthier weight. Plant foods are

rich in fiber and antioxidants that are important in the fight against cancer. Try to eat at least five servings of non-starchy vegetables and fruit a day, replace animal proteins with plant proteins from beans and legumes and replace processed grains with intact whole grains or starchy vegetables.

## 5. Limit intake of red meat and avoid processed meat.

A plant-based diet is also recommended for cancer prevention because of the association between meat consumption and cancer risk. The frequent consumption of red meat (beef, pork and lamb) and processed meats (such as smoked, salted, chemically preserved or nitrite-containing sandwich meat, including ham, turkey and chicken) has been shown to increase the risk of stomach, colon and rectal cancers. Cooking red meats over high heat and charring the outside also raise their carcinogenicity. The panel set a generous limit on red meat consumption at 11 ounces a week, noting that every 1.7 ounces above that limit raises cancer risk by 15%. There is no safe level of processed meat, though. Each 1.7 ounces consumed raises cancer risk by 21%, so eating one turkey sandwich a week could raise your cancer risk by 42%.

## 6. Limit alcoholic drinks.

Even small amounts of any type of alcohol raise cancer risk, but the panel stopped short of recommending that we avoid it. Instead, they limit it to one drink a day for women and two for men since alcohol gives some modest protection against heart disease. Alcohol does not just increase liver cancer risk; it also increases susceptibility to cancers of the breast and digestive tract, including the mouth.

## 7. Limit consumption of salt and avoid moldy grains and legumes.

Salt, salted foods and processed foods preserved with salt are linked to stomach cancer. Limit your salt intake to no more than 2,400 milligrams a day, but a 2,000 milligram limit is preferable. Moldy grains and legumes contain toxins that cause liver cancer, so be picky when eating peanuts and other grains imported from tropical countries.

## 8. Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone.

Our goal should be to eat a nutritionally adequate diet. Taking dietary supplements that isolate what we believe to be the protective phytonutrients and vitamins from fruit, vegetables, grains and legumes are unlikely to offer any cancer protection because of the unique packaging of fiber and nutrients that naturally exist in plants and because it is not totally clear which nutrients are the important ones. Furthermore, high doses of isolated nutrient supplements can have the unintended effect of causing cancer. Forget about those broccoli pills—your best bet for optimal health and disease prevention is to eat between seven and 11 servings of produce daily.

If you find that you have several risk factors for cancer, I hope that this will motivate you to make some positive changes since your risk is not set in stone—you can change your risk by making healthful modifications to your lifestyle. Even if your cancer risk is low, all of these recommendations form the basis of a healthful eating and lifestyle plan. Regardless of your risk, I hope that now your fears about cancer have been replaced with awareness of the things you can do to better protect your health.

## Food of the Month

# Turnips

This is the final installment of my year-long series on produce outcasts. This year, I have written

about several fruits and vegetables that don't seem healthful but actually pack quite a nutritional punch. I thought I had run out of fodder, but then I was pleasantly surprised to learn about turnips. They are much more than hearty root vegetables; they're also a part of our edible cancer prevention arsenal.

Turnips are a member of the Brassica family, which means they are related to cabbage and broccoli. This group of cruciferous vegetables, which also includes mustard greens, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and arugula, contains sulfur-rich phytonutrients called glucosinolates. Glucosinolates are considered "indirect" antioxidants because they signal our bodies to make our own antioxidants. The antioxidants that we make ourselves are fantastic because they can be produced for three or four days after we eat a food like turnips, whereas antioxidants that we eat tend to leave our systems in a matter of hours. These indirect antioxidants play an important role in cancer prevention, especially for breast, ovarian, prostate, lung, colon and

stomach cancers. Glucosinolates also seem to help stimulate our body's own internal detoxification system. Turnips are high in vitamin C, potassium and fiber.

A half cup of cooked mashed turnips has 30 calories, 2 grams of fiber and 22% of your Daily Value of vitamin C.

Turnips are crisp, like carrots, but have a sweet peppery flavor. They are shaped like beets but are mostly a creamy white color, with the exception of their tops, which have been exposed to sunlight and are usually purple or green.

The leaves are edible and very nutritious. Although some turnips can weigh up to 50 pounds, the variety that we carry at Gelson's range from a quarter of a pound to one and a half pounds each, depending on the season.

Turnips are in season from October through March, but they are available all year. When selecting turnips, choose those that are small and heavy for their size and are free from bruises. Larger turnips can be woody and tough. When you bring them home, remove any green tops and store them in a separate bag if you plan to eat them; store the turnip roots for up to a week and the leaves for a couple of days in the crisper drawer. To prepare turnips, cut off the roots and tops and peel the waxy coating. You can eat small, in-season turnips raw; shred them into salads and coleslaw. You can also steam and boil them but be careful not to overcook them as their flavor will turn bitter and strong. Turnip greens can be lightly sautéed in olive oil. This month, try my recipe for Braised Turnips and Leeks.



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