

# Diet, Exercise, & Natural Medicine Strategies for Cancer Patients

**Kristin Stiles Green, ND**  
**Director of Naturopathic Medicine**  
**Cancer Treatment Centers of America**  
**Midwestern Regional Medical Center**  
**Zion, IL**



Winning the fight against cancer, every day.®

# What is Cancer?

- **Cancer** - is uncontrolled, cellular growth with properties of tissue invasion that can spread to other parts of the body
- Normal, healthy cells grow, divide and die in an orderly fashion.
- Cancer cells are different because they do not die when they should. They continue to divide and grow in an uncontrolled fashion.
- Cancer cells can outgrow their surrounding area and invade other tissues or even distant areas. This is what separates malignant (cancerous) growths from benign growths.

# Causes of Cancer

- Cancer cells form as a result of damaged DNA.
- There is a fundamental loss of “identity” and loss of control over normal cell reproduction
- 80% of cancers are considered sporadic-meaning the cause is unknown.
- There are several risk factors that can increase the risk of developing cancer...

# Causes of Cancer

- **Obesity** - research indicates being overweight or obese is a risk factor
- **Tobacco use**- increases the risk of almost all cancers. Pipes and chewing tobacco increase the risk of developing cancers of the head and neck.
- **Chemicals**- exposure to asbestos, radon and benzenes can be a risk factor for developing cancer
- **Age** – risk of cancer increases with age (traditionally over the age of 50)
- **Diet** – high fat, low fiber, and nutritionally poor diets may contribute

# Causes of Cancer

- Heredity- there can be a genetic or inherited risk factors
- Exposure to high levels of radiation can predispose
- Harmful ultraviolet rays can be a factor (e.g. sun exposure, tanning beds).
- Some viruses can contribute such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HPV, Epstein-Barr virus.
- Immune system diseases can increase risk (e.g. HIV)

# Diet and Cancer Recommendations

- Choose most of the foods you eat from plant sources.
- Eat five or more servings of vegetables and fruits each day (a minimum of 2 ½ cups)
- Limit your intake of high fat foods, particularly from animal sources. \*\*\*There is little evidence that the total amount of fat a person eats contributes to cancer risk. But diets high in fat tend to be high in calories and, thus, may contribute to obesity (this is linked to an increased risk of several types of cancer).
- There is evidence that certain types of fats, such as saturated fats, may increase cancer risk
- Limit alcohol intake.