

Oncology Nutrition



Nutrition and Cancer Myths



Myth: Sugar feeds cancer

The typical American diet is high in many processed and refined foods, including sugar and white flours. Replacing these foods with healthy forms of carbohydrates, such as fruits and whole grains is advised for people who have had cancer.

However, being fearful of, or restricting intake of certain foods that contain natural sugars (i.e. fruits and dairy products) is not necessary or healthful.

It's the diet high in added sugars, combined with the sedentary lifestyle, which can lead to being overweight/obese, as well as insulin resistance. Those factors are what increase cancer risk, not the "sugar" in the diet itself.



Myth: Vitamins and supplements can cure cancer



While every individual is different, overall, research shows the supplements do not offer cancer protections or provide benefits to survivors worried about recurrence. In some cases, supplements may even be harmful.

You should aim to meet all of your nutritional needs through diet.

Supplements are typically discouraged during chemotherapy treatments. Make sure to report to your oncologist any supplements that you take.

When you eat whole foods, your body absorbs a whole range of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that get to work together to protect your health.

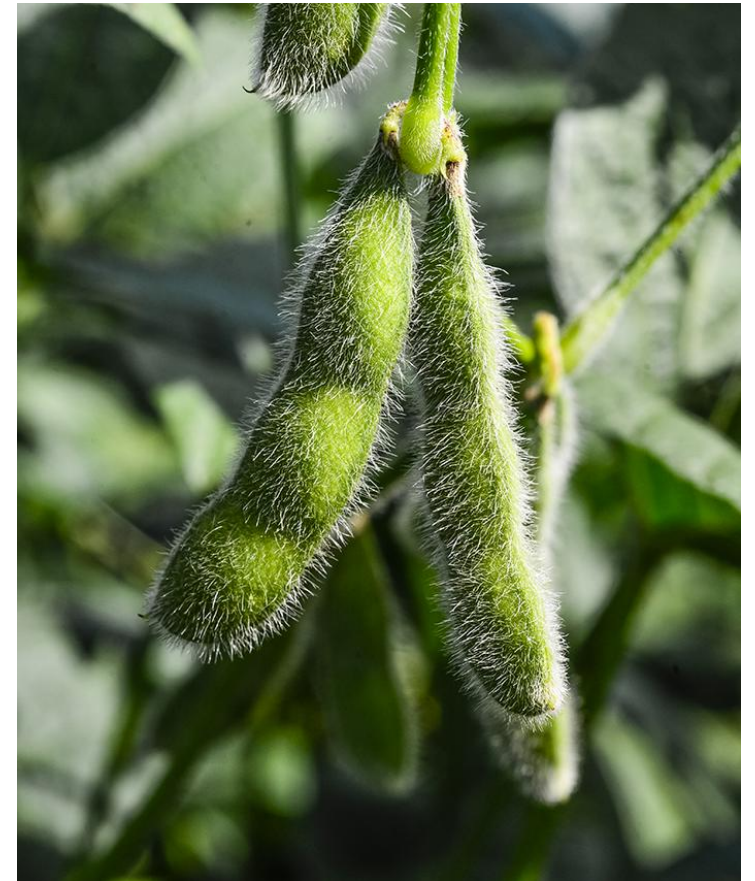
(See handout "Cancer Fighters in Your Foods" from AICR.)

Myth: Breast cancer patients should avoid soy

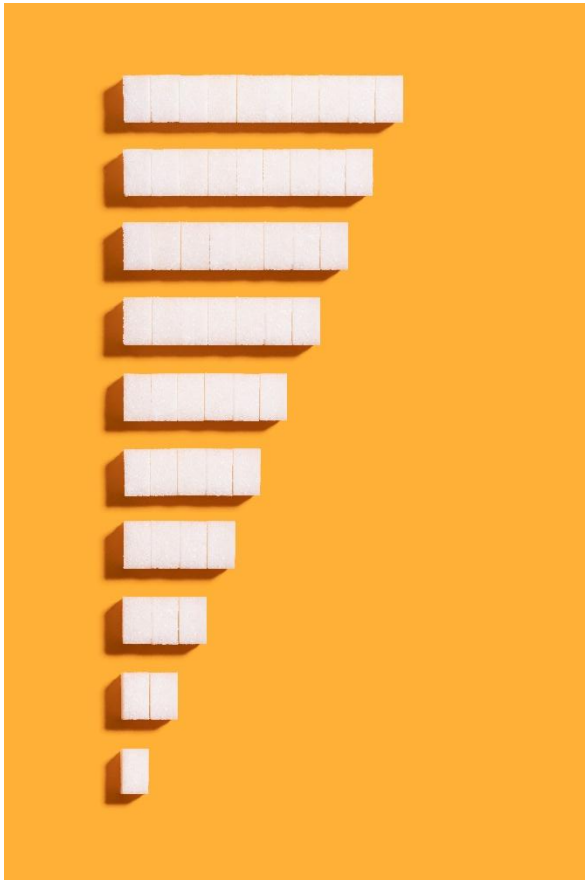
The body of research shows that for breast cancer patients and survivors, consuming moderate amounts of soy foods does not increase women's risk for recurrence or earlier death.

There is research showing that soy may offer a modest protective affect against breast cancer.

A moderate amount of soy foods daily is equal to one to two standard servings of soy foods a day (such as tofu, soy milk and edamame).



Myth: Artificial sweeteners cause cancer



While it is true that saccharin, sucralose, aspartame are a type synthetic additive in foods (sweeteners Stevia and Monk Fruit are a natural plant-based sweeteners) there is still **no conclusive scientific research/evidence at all**, in the amount a person could possibly ingest normally, that their use can cause cancer.

That being said, nutrition professionals **discourage a diet high in processed foods with additives**. Encouraged, are whole foods consumption, for a variety of health-related reasons.

Thank You!

