

Lifestyle strategies following a cancer diagnosis



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Promoting Sustainable Health and Nutrition

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Every year 20 million people globally emerge as cancer **survivors**



Research shows that focussing on healthy habits after a cancer diagnosis may improve outcomes and reduce the risk of cancer recurrence.

Healthy lifestyle habits can reduce the risk of developing chronic conditions, which may arise as a consequence of a cancer diagnosis, its treatments, or otherwise. **These include:**



High cholesterol

High blood pressure



Type 2 diabetes



Stroke



Heart disease

Healthy habits can improve quality of life, mental health and wellbeing.



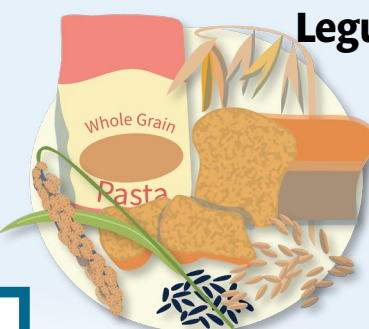
Nutrition: more plants, better health

Aim for a more fibre-rich, plant-predominant whole foods diet, by eating:

And at least **8-10 portions** of fruit and vegetables a day.

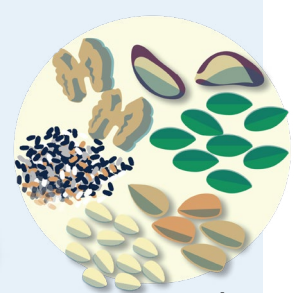


A portion is about 80 grams, or a handful.



Whole grains

Legumes



Nuts and seeds

Focus on different colours to increase the variety of plants in the diet.



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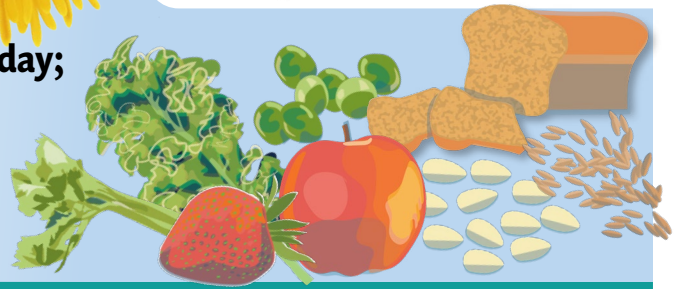


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Increase dietary fibre to at least 30 grams per day; more can be better.

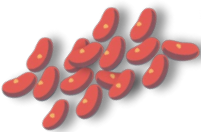
Fibre is **only** found in **plants**, so centre your meals around whole and minimally processed **plant foods**.



Get most or all of your protein from plant sources:

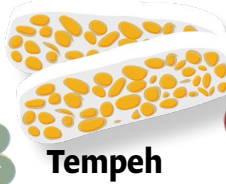
This includes:

Beans



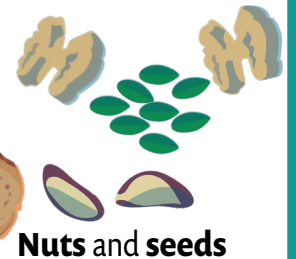
Lentils

Pulses



Tempeh

Seitan



Nuts and seeds

Soya is a great source of protein and other nutrients:

It is now well-established that minimally processed soya foods, such as **tofu**, **tempeh**, **edamame beans** and **soya drinks** are **healthy**, with **benefits** for **cancer** and **cardiovascular disease**.



Swapping cow's milk for soya is considered good for health.

Reduce or eliminate proinflammatory foods:

Minimise intake of **meat**, and preferably **cut out red** and **processed meat** completely.



Limit sweetened drinks, **fast food**, and foods **high in salt, fat, refined starches** and **sugar**, such as **cakes**, **biscuits**, **pastries**, and **fried snacks**.



Opt for **whole grains** over refined grains by choosing **wholemeal bread**, **pasta**, and **brown rice** instead of white varieties. **Sourdough breads** can be a good option.



A focus on **plant foods** in the diet helps to maintain a **healthy gut microbiome** - the **trillions of microorganisms** in our **digestive tract**. We know that **good gut health** is very **important** for **improving** overall **health** and **wellbeing**.



Aim to get all nutritional recommendations from your diet.

Please refer to our **Plant-Based Eatwell Guide** for guidance on what supplements we advise if you are eating a **100% or predominantly plant-based diet**.

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Physical activity: work **movement** into your life!

Any amount of physical activity is better than none, but the more the better.

Everyday activities such as gardening, housework, and walking to the shops, supports **better health**.



Aim for at least **150 mins moderate** activity **per week** (where you can talk but not sing) or **75 mins of vigorous** activity (where you sweat and find talking difficult).



Avoid prolonged sedentary behaviour i.e. sitting for more than an hour. Think of exercise as a '**snack**', by doing a few **squats**, walking up and down the **stairs**, or a couple of **stretches** whenever you can.



Add **two 30-minute** sessions of **strength** or **resistance** training on **non-consecutive** days, along with **mobility** and **flexibility** exercises.



Sleep: **recharge**

Aim for around **7-9 hours** of **restorative sleep** per night.



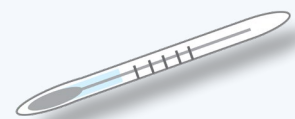
Avoid/ limit screen time 90 minutes prior to sleep, and activities that cause **stress** or are **stimulatory**, such as emails and social media.



Limit caffeine consumption to **before 2pm** if possible.



Keep a consistent sleep schedule (bedtime and wake time).



Keep your room dark, quiet and slightly **cool**, rather than too warm.

Keep the bed for sleep and sex only.



Increase daytime exposure to sunlight.



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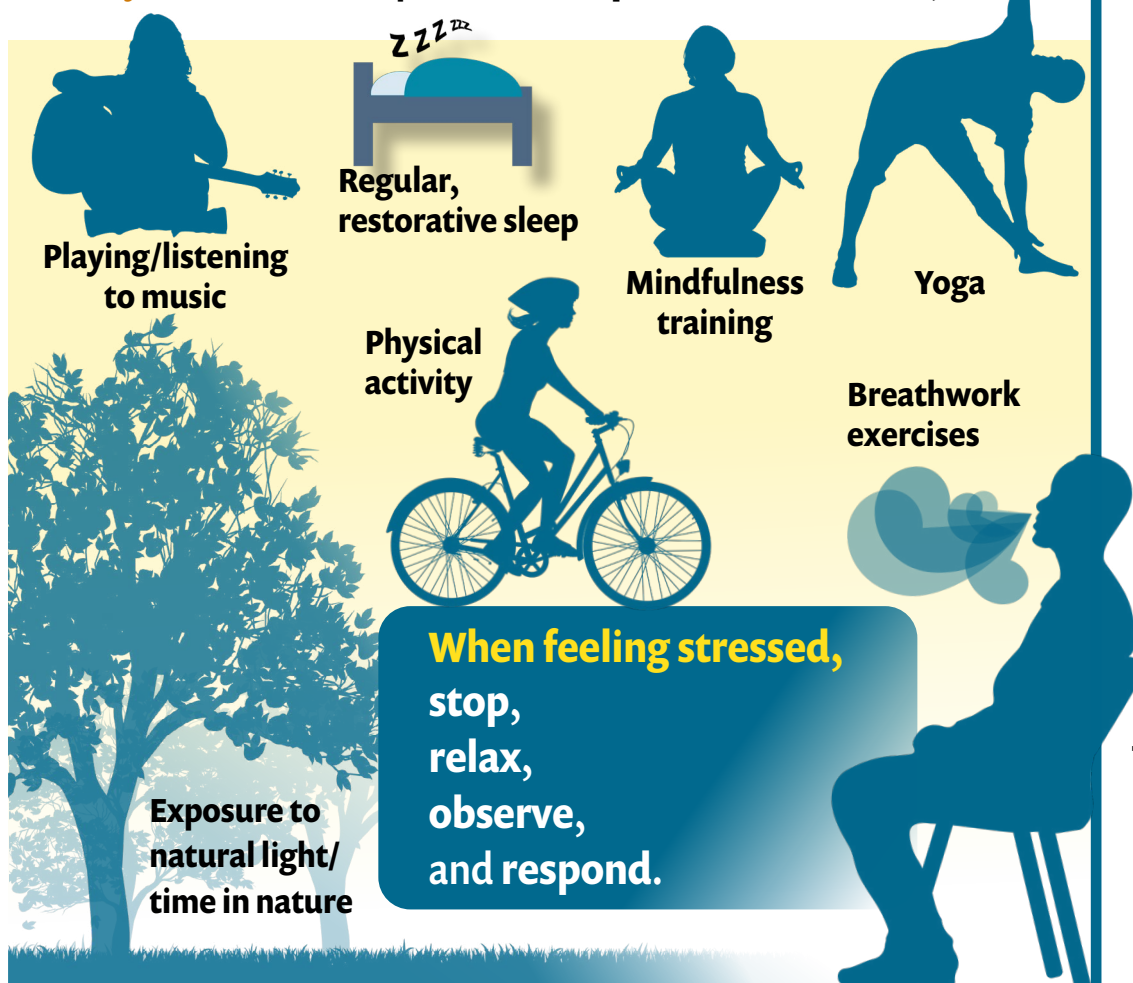
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Stress: build your **resilience**

It is **normal** to experience stress in our lives, but experiencing **stress over a long period of time** can negatively affect health.

Healthy activities that help to **reduce/cope** with stress include;



Helpful apps are available including:



Headspace



Calm



Tapping Solution



Insight timer is a free meditation app

Breathing in for **5 seconds** and then out for **5 seconds** can help you maintain **composure** in stressful moments.

Avoiding harmful substances: your body needs to **recover!**



Alcohol is a direct cause of cancer and causes other health harms. There is **no safe limit** of alcohol when it comes to cancer, so it is best **not to drink at all**.

Tobacco is a recognised cause of cancer and several other chronic conditions. If you smoke tobacco, it is **very important to stop**. The NHS provides support to people to quit smoking.

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Healthy relationships: happy life

The single most important **predictor of happiness and longevity** is having **strong and positive social connections**.

Having a **clear purpose** and a **strong support network** is important, as **loneliness** can negatively impact your health.

Consider **joining an exercise or other activity group**; pursuing **hobbies** is a great way to relax, have **fun**, and meet with **like-minded people**.



Embrace support from family and friends, and look for ways to **help others**. Try to think **outside yourself**. Ask your healthcare provider about **local initiatives and groups** you can **join**.

Spending time in nature: Re-energise



Boost your daytime **sunlight exposure** by taking a **walk in the park** or spending time in your **backyard free from distractions** like **mobile phones and other devices**. **Outdoor activities** like **hiking or gardening** will **top up** stores of **Vitamin D**, which has many important **health benefits**, including **immune support** and for **bone health**.

Being **one with nature**, the practice of **being amongst trees** and **absorbing the beauty of a natural setting**, has been shown to have benefits of **lowering blood pressure, heart rate, and stress hormones**, while **supporting the immune system, improving sleep** and overall feeling of **wellbeing**. If you can't get outdoors, keeping **indoor house plants** is of benefit.

Additional therapies: look after yourself.

- **Acupuncture/acupressure**
- **Tai-chi**
- **Massage therapy**
- **Gratitude practice**
- **Art work**
- **Journalling**

This list is not exhaustive...



All of these **healthy habits** will also help maintain a **healthy body weight**, which is very important after a diagnosis of cancer and helps to **prevent other chronic conditions**.

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Free resources and initiatives



MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT



ONC:O



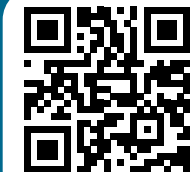
ACTIV8
EAT WELL. MOVE MORE.



Penny Brohn^{UK}
Cancer wellbeing for everyone



20 **YES TO LIFE**
YOUR OPTIONS FOR CANCER
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



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