

## **Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center**

Center your diet around fruits and vegetables and you'll have one of the best prescriptions for good health. These foods are important, not only for normal body functioning (tissue repair, vision, etc.), but they also may protect you from diseases like high blood pressure, heart disease and, most of all, cancer.

Diet plays a big role in cancer prevention. It is estimated that over one third of all cancer-related deaths could be prevented by a healthy diet. Fruits and vegetables are key. Research suggests that people who eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day cut their cancer risk in half when compared to those who consume one serving or less. The National Cancer Institute estimates that by the year 2000, the incidence of colorectal cancer could be cut in half,, breast cancer reduced by 25%, and cancers of the prostate, endometrium and gallbladder by 15% if we all started eating 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

Vegetables are especially nutrient dense. Calorie for calorie they pack more vitamins, minerals, fiber and other cancer-fighting agents than any other food group. Cabbage family (cruciferous) vegetables are particularly powerful cancer fighters. Cabbage contains at least 11 of the 15 families of vegetable-related compounds found to prevent cancer. Studies suggest that these compounds may hinder a number of steps in the cancer process. An optional diet, therefore includes several servings of cabbage and other cruciferous vegetables per week

Although it is frightening that one out of three Americans will get cancer during their lifetime, it is comforting to know that we can do a lot to prevent this disease. One path to prevention includes a healthy diet with at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Remember, we can all do a lot to prevent cancer...not only in ourselves, but in our families and children as well. We, at the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center, urge you to join us in our fight against cancer. Choose a varied, low fat diet and make room for extra servings of vegetables and fruits.



Wendy Demark, Ph.D., R.D., L.D.N.