

# The 5 foods that cut your odds for colon cancer

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(HealthDay)—When it comes to guarding against colon cancer, what you eat is everything.

You can reduce your risk of [colon cancer](#) by eating five food types, an expert says. These include: vegetables; whole grains; legumes; nuts and seeds; and fiber-rich [fruit](#).

"Vegetables contain cancer-preventing nutrients called carotenoids and flavonoids," said Amy Rosenfeld, program coordinator of community health, education and outreach and a registered dietitian at the Center for Healthy Living at Northern Westchester Hospital, in Mount Kisco, N.Y.

"Vegetables are high in fiber, bulking your stool and limiting the amount of time waste spends in your colon, reducing your risk for [colorectal cancers](#)," she added.

At every meal, you should try to cover half your plate with colorful vegetables, and that can include

frozen vegetables, which are affordable and ready-to-eat, Rosenfeld said.

Whole grain foods have high levels of fiber. When shopping for bread and cereal products, select those that list whole grain ingredients first.

"Try replacing white grains—like [white rice](#)—with whole [grains](#) or mixing the two together. Eating three servings, or about three ounces of [whole grains](#) a day, will not only increase fiber, but also B vitamins and important minerals, such as iron, zinc, copper and magnesium," Rosenfeld said.

Examples of whole grain products include whole wheat bread, barley, oats, quinoa, buckwheat, corn, brown rice and wild rice.

Legumes have lots of fiber and help keep your digestive tract healthy. "By regularly eating [beans](#) and lentils, you lower your risk for cancerous colon polyps (small growths)," Rosenfeld said. "Try substituting beans or lentils for meat twice a week or reducing meat in your recipes and add in legumes."

Put navy beans, chickpeas, [fava beans](#), kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, black beans and cannellini beans on your grocery list, she suggested.

The next category is nuts and seeds, which "are the perfect foods," according to Rosenfeld. "Their fiber, healthy fat, phytochemicals, and antioxidants all have cancer-fighting properties. Try snacking on nuts or seeds instead of chips or pretzels. Natural nut and seed butters make a great dip for your favorite fruit. Mix in ground flax seeds or chia seeds into oatmeal."

It's also important include fresh or frozen fiber-rich fruit in your diet, she said in a hospital news release.

"Eat the rainbow when it comes to fruits," Rosenfeld recommended. "Try to eat one to two cups of fruit each day and mix up the colors. Each color fruit has a unique combination of nutrients with cancer-fighting properties. Fruit also has fiber, vitamins and minerals, and its natural sweetness helps you resist refined sugary treats without nutritional benefits."

**More information:** The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more on [colorectal cancer prevention](#).

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