

Nutrition and Breast Cancer

Recent evidence suggests there may be a relationship between our food and the risk for developing certain cancers. It is important to realize that diet is only one of the numerous factors that may play a part in the development of cancer. So, Alice can understand your concern. Although no diet will guarantee total protection against cancer, it is one factor you can control.

The connection between diet and breast cancer is not as clear as some of the connections between diet and other cancers. A majority of the studies in this area show a relationship between a high fat diet and the increased risk for developing breast cancer. A recent Harvard University study reported differing results. After studying over 335,000 women, they found a low fat diet to be no more protective than the typical American diet of over 30% fat. The conflicting evidence in this area continues to confuse the medical and scientific communities as well as the general public.

One sensible proposal may be that the fat in the American diet contributes to a high caloric intake, which together may increase the risk for developing breast cancer. Lowering fat AND calories while increasing fiber may be the most healthful changes the American public can make. The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for decreasing the risk of all cancers:

- Avoid Obesity
- Cut down on total fat intake
- Eat more high fiber foods
- Include foods rich in Vitamins A & C
- Include cruciferous vegetables (cabbage family)
- Limit consumption of salt cured and smoked foods
- Keep alcohol consumption moderate

It is generally a good idea to eat a plant-based diet high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals to help decrease the risk for developing all cancers. Eating these foods which are naturally low in fat, cholesterol, salt, and sugar can help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, strokes, diabetes, and obesity. Constipation should also be alleviated.