



Cancer and Diet

Cancer is unfortunately one of the most common diseases in South Africa, with one in six South African men and one in seven South African women likely to develop cancer. It's a life-threatening disease affecting people of all ages, races and gender.

Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body that can damage various organs, including skin, breast, colon, lung, bones and prostate. It usually requires painful treatment such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

Even though certain risk factors are beyond your control - such as family history and ageing - most cancers are lifestyle-related and can be prevented. Research has shown that up to 90% of cancers are due to environmental factors, with diet estimated to be responsible for about 30-40% of all cancers.

Maintaining good general health is the best start you can make. Be aware of your environment as this influences your risk status. Clean air, clean water, nutritious food and a healthy lifestyle are all very important. A diet low in fat, high in vegetables and fibre, and food with anti-cancer properties is optimal.

Eat Defensively!

- Vegetables that offer cancer protection include broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts, turnip greens, cauliflower, dark leafy greens, carrots and tomatoes - all of these are best served raw or lightly cooked
- Fruits that offer cancer protection include citrus, berries and cherries
- Some foods are renowned for their anti-cancer properties - these include soy and foods with Omega-3 fatty acids like sardines, salmon, herring, tuna, cod, mackerel, halibut, flaxseed, walnuts and beans
- Minimise you intake of sunflower, corn and cottonseed oils and rather use canola and olive oil, or indulge in food that contains naturally good fats like avocados and oily fish high in Omega-3
- When it comes to carbohydrates, rather go brown than white - add brown rice, brown sugar, whole grains and beans to your diet
- Eating the optimal diet is no easy task - supplement your diet with vitamins and minerals such as Omega 3 fats and the cancer-protective mineral Selenium.

Control What You Can

- Minimise or avoid alcohol - try healthier alternatives such as water, fruit cocktails and alcohol-free mixers
- Get help to stop smoking and help smokers around you to quit - smoking is the second largest cause of death globally, killing one in ten adults worldwide.

For more information on cancer, contact a Kaelo Patient Manager or EAP counsellor, or visit www.cansa.org or www.health24.com