



# You are what you eat

Nutrition that helps your body fend off cancer and other diseases

BY ELISE RILEY

**W**ho knew?

The right diet can not only keep you slim and trim, but can also help to fend off one of our biggest enemies: cancer.

"While we haven't yet targeted specific foods to fight specific cancers, we know that a healthy diet rich in antioxidants and phytochemicals is helpful," said Debra Kohl, MS, RD, CNSC, a clinical nutrition specialist with Arizona Oncology in Phoenix.

## Antioxidants important

Some of the best chemicals with the potential for fighting cancer are antioxidants, which help purge harmful cells from the body. Think of it this way: if your body was a nightclub, the antioxidants would be the bouncer.

Antioxidants and phytochemicals are commonly found in fruits and vegetables. Berries — strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and more — are "cramped with antioxidants," Kohl said, as are cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. Green tea is also antioxidant-rich.

## Rainbow of colors

The key to getting the most out of these foods isn't focusing on just one. Instead, it's about introducing many different phytochemicals through a variety of foods.

Christi Kirk, RD, CSO, a board-certified specialist in oncology nutrition with

The James M. Cox Center for Cancer Prevention and Integrative Oncology at the Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center in Gilbert, recommends making vegetable and fruit salads with multiple ingredients — a rainbow of colors. She also suggests eating plant-based proteins such as quinoa or lentils, which can further boost the immune system.

**Think of it this way: if your body was a nightclub, the antioxidants would be the bouncer.**

## Helpful for anyone

Regardless of a person's health, phytochemicals and antioxidants are helpful for any diet. They are particularly important, however, for someone who is undergoing or recovering from cancer treatment.

"Those foods are helpful when we're talking about people who are at high risk for cancer, but they're also extremely helpful for someone who is in treatment or survivorship," Kirk said, adding that a plant-based diet shouldn't be confused with being vegetarian or vegan. "It's emphasizing those plants that have phytochemicals, which can help prevent disease — in this case, cancer."

## 5 healthy-eating tips and tricks

Our experts provided these tips for integrating cancer-fighting phytochemicals and antioxidants into your daily diet:

- 1 Think about portions:** Two-thirds of your meals should be plant-based (fruits and veggies). Reserve one-third for lean animal protein.
- 2 Talk to your doc:** If you're at risk of cancer or undergoing treatment, ask your doctor about your diet. An appointment with a nutritionist could help.
- 3 Avoid fads:** Fad diets come by the dozens but often forget the basics of nutrition. Avoid anything that advertises a 'miracle' or 'cure'.
- 4 Think about color:** Make colorful salads with different types of lettuce and vegetables. Eat fruit salads with multiple berries. You'll glean all the benefits of different phytochemicals that way.
- 5 Read up:** The American Institute for Cancer Research ([aicr.org](http://aicr.org)), American Cancer Society ([cancer.org](http://cancer.org)), and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics ([eatright.org](http://eatright.org)) all have websites with recipes and research on cancer-fighting foods.

## Sprouted grain breads A healthy choice

BY ALISON STANTON

**S**prouted grain breads use seeds that straddle the line between a seed and a plant, said Janet Little, director of nutrition for Sprouts Farmers Market.

"Grains are seeds that can become a plant, given the right temperature and moisture," she said. "The germination process breaks down the starches and the seed begins to sprout. Once sprouting occurs, the grain is at its highest nutritional potential."

## Breaks down starches

The germination process increases the grains' digestibility by breaking down starches into simple sugars so the body can easily digest them, Little said, adding that this sprouting process also increases the protein profile — especially the amino acid lysine — and boosts the bioavailability of vitamins, particularly vitamin C.

In addition, the sprouting process increases other desirable minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron, copper and zinc.

## Packs more fiber

Little said that sprouted breads are free of refined carbohydrates, pack more fiber than most white or wheat breads, and are especially healthful, "because they can provide a complete set of amino acids — the building blocks of protein — making them a great option for those on a plant-based diet."



REPUBLIC MEDIA  
**CUSTOM PUBLISHING**

A division of *The Arizona Republic*.  
200 E. Van Buren St., Phoenix, AZ 85004

**Look for Livingwell a-z on the first Wednesday of each month!** Each month, we bring you local health information you can use to keep you and your family living well. From A to Z, we tackle a broad range of health issues and offer you a wealth of resources where you can find more specific information. This publication is produced by Republic Media Custom Publishing. For questions concerning any content included in this publication please contact: Editor Paula Hubbs Cohen, [Paula.Cohen@cox.net](mailto:Paula.Cohen@cox.net) or call 602-444-8658.

General Manager:  
**CAMI KAISER**, [ckaiser@republicmedia.com](mailto:ckaiser@republicmedia.com)

Creative Development Director:  
**ISAAC MOYA**, [imoya@republicmedia.com](mailto:imoya@republicmedia.com)

Editor: **PAULA HUBBS COHEN**, [Paula.Cohen@cox.net](mailto:Paula.Cohen@cox.net)

Contributing Editor:  
**JIM WILLIAMS**, [jwilliams@republicmedia.com](mailto:jwilliams@republicmedia.com)

Senior Managing Art Director:  
**TRACEY PHALEN**, [tphalen@republicmedia.com](mailto:tphalen@republicmedia.com)

Design: **LISA QUIRIN**, [lisa\\_q@me.com](mailto:lisa_q@me.com)

Editorial Coordinator: **NICK KOSTENKO**

Advertising: **RHONDA PRINGLE**, 602-444-4929, [rpringle@republicmedia.com](mailto:rpringle@republicmedia.com). For general advertising inquiries, contact Republic Media at 602-444-8000.

THE NEW RULES OF RETIREMENT  
— RULE N<sup>o</sup> 1 —

*As a resident, you should always be treated like a guest.*



From resort-quality hospitality to the promise of life care, we're committed to taking care of you. Inspiration awaits. Discover Vi today.



Redefining  
**SENIOR  
LIVING**

23005 N. 74th Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85255  
480.719.5679 • [ViLiving.com/Silverstone](http://ViLiving.com/Silverstone)