

Sugar and Cancer

Does sugar feed cancer? The answer is not as simple as yes or no. The term sugar does just not mean the white sugar used to sweeten beverages and desserts. Sugars are present in many healthy foods like whole grain breads, cereals, potatoes, beans, corn, milk and fruit. You may hear them called carbohydrates, starches, sugars, honey, syrups, turbinado, molasses, among others. Our body breaks all of them down to the same molecule, glucose, the sugar in your blood. Glucose provides energy or “feeds” all the cells in our body, the good ones and the cancer ones equally.

Glucose is so vital for our body that even if it was possible for us not to consume it, our body would make it anyway, because it is the on-

ly source of energy for our brain.

A carbohydrate or “sugar” free diet would eliminate all breads, rice, pasta, cereals, potatoes, beans, lentils, fruit, milk and yogurt. It would cause malnutrition, and many mineral and vitamin deficiencies.



There is no direct link between the “sugar” we consume and tumor growth. However, eating too many foods rich in simple sugar (like sweets, sodas, desserts, pastas, breads and candies) provide excess calories that promote obesity. Obesity is linked to a higher risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.

If you are trying to prevent

cancer, follow a plant based diet rich in fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, low fat dairy and lean cuts of meats. Reaching a healthy weight and maintaining it is the best thing you can do to reduce your risk of chronic disease.

If you have cancer, focusing on consuming enough calories and protein to maintain your weight and muscle mass is vital. This may mean including simple sugars in your diet (like milkshakes and ice cream) since these are easily tolerated and provide many calories in small servings.

The bottom line is following a healthy diet that includes a variety of foods, limiting excess calories and being physically active is the best way to maintain a healthy weight and reduce the risk of chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease and diabetes.