

# Wellness Ways

The Methodist Hospital, Corporate Wellness • 713.441.5978 • www.methodistcorporatewellness.com

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## Get Aboard the Fruits and Veggie Pyramid

It's hard to believe so many good things are stuffed inside the skins of colorful fruits and vegetables. The minerals, vitamins and fiber contained in the daily government recommended servings of fruits and vegetables can help our bodies fight disease and stay healthier longer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture food pyramid recommends we eat two cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables each day based on a 2,000-calorie diet. When it comes to meeting these guidelines, the choices are bountiful. Think variety, creativity and color when deciding how to meet your fruit and vegetable quota.

The food pyramid divides vegetables into five groups:

- Dark green, including broccoli, green leafy lettuce and spinach.
- Orange, including squashes, carrots and sweet potatoes.
- Dry beans and peas, including black and kidney beans.
- Starchy vegetables, including corn, green peas and potatoes.
- The "others" vegetable category includes cauliflower, green beans, mushrooms, tomatoes, cabbage and many more.

Any piece of fruit or 100 percent fruit juice counts toward fruit intake. We get the same health benefits whether the fruit is fresh, frozen, canned or dried. From apples to tangerines, fruits provide natural substances our bodies crave and need.

See the related story, *A Rainbow of Good Health*, on the back page of this issue for more choices on filling up with fruits and vegetables.

## Prostate Cancer

### Know the Risk Factors & Get Screened

When it comes to prostate cancer, the numbers carry good and bad news.

The good news: U.S. prostate cancer deaths in 2007 will decrease by 1 percent from last year because of increased awareness and early screenings.

The bad news: the disease remains the second-leading cancer killer for men, with 27,050 American men projected to die from prostate cancer this year.

The key to beating prostate cancer – like so many other cancers – is to catch it early when treatment and recovery odds are much greater. The top three strategies for dealing with prostate cancer are to know your risk factors, get screened and make informed treatment decisions with a trusted physician.

#### Risk Factors

1. **Age** is among prostate cancer's biggest risk factors. According to the National Prostate Cancer Coalition, men over 60 have a nearly 15 percent chance of getting the disease compared to a less than 1 percent chance for men under 40. The rarer cases that hit men under 50, however, have been found to be more aggressive, so awareness of other risk factors is vital.
2. **African American men** have a 60 percent higher risk for prostate cancer than other ethnicities, and statistics show 1 in 4 African American males will be diagnosed with some form of the disease during his lifetime.
3. **A family history** of prostate cancer can double the risk factor for men. The more close blood relatives diagnosed with the disease, the greater a man's chances for a similar diagnosis.
4. **Diet's** link to prostate cancer remains an active area of research, but studies have shown the American diet of high sugar, meat and fat intake – combined with a lower intake of fiber and vegetables – may be a risk factor for prostate cancer. Obese men with a body mass index greater than 32 ½ percent are more likely to die if diagnosed with prostate cancer.
5. **Pesticides, herbicides and other chemical exposures** have been linked to higher rates of prostate cancer in men. Farm workers, veterans (especially those from the Viet Nam and Koreans wars) and men with other occupations that bring them into contact with chemicals may have a higher risk for the disease.




Men with any of the above risk factors should consider earlier prostate cancer screenings than normally recommended.


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# A Rainbow of Good Health


Picture a colorful rainbow created from shades of yellow, orange, green, red, pink and purple. Now imagine fresh specimens of corn, carrots, spinach, red peppers, pink grapefruit and purple grapes stacked end-to-end in a smorgasbord of healthy food.

It's a picture good enough to eat. And the more colorful fruits and vegetables you *do* eat every day, the better off you are. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveals the health benefits hidden inside the colorful covers of your favorite fruits and vegetables:

 **Vitamin C** acts as a healing agent and also promotes healthy teeth and gums. Find it in kiwi, strawberries, red and green peppers, pineapple, oranges, mangoes, tomato juice, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, kale, Brussels sprouts and cantaloupe.

 **Vitamin A** fends off infections and is important for healthy skin. Get it from squash, mustard greens, carrots, spinach, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, turnip greens, cantaloupe, red peppers and Chinese cabbage.

 **Fiber** promotes good digestion and decreases the risk of coronary artery disease. All fruits and vegetables offer fiber, but especially excellent sources include artichokes, black eyed peas, lentils, chick peas, soybeans, split peas and beans of all kinds (navy, kidney, black, pinto, lima and white).

 **Potassium** is thought to help maintain healthy blood pressure levels. You can find rich sources in sweet potatoes, tomato puree and paste, white potatoes, white and lima beans, beet and cooked greens and carrot and prune juices.

Fruits and vegetables offer many creative ways for good presentation – and we all like to eat things that look good. So put some colorful berries on your breakfast cereal, cut up some vivid orange carrots to dip in yogurt or peanut butter at snack time and decorate your dinner plates with the amazing colors in a vegetable stir fry.

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### Get Screened

Ten minutes can save a life. That's how long a simple prostate cancer screening takes. The screening includes a blood test to measure the PSA level, which stands for Prostate Specific Antigen, and a digital rectal exam (DRE). Together these exams will tell your physician whether further testing is needed.

Men should begin annual prostate cancer screenings at 50. But those with one or more risk factors should start the screenings at least a decade earlier. Younger men often seek a one-time test earlier in life to establish a baseline PSA that can be compared to levels later in life.

Early in its development, prostate cancer has no symptoms. As it advances, however, a man may see blood in the urine or may experience too frequent urination or painful urination. Bone pain is another symptom, as are any changes in potency, libido or ejaculation.

For more information on prostate cancer screening, call Methodist Wellness Services at 713-441-5978 or visit [www.methodistcorporatewellness.com](http://www.methodistcorporatewellness.com).

### Prostate Cancer Treatment

Once diagnosed, prostate cancer treatment should be a well-informed decision by the patient and a trusted doctor. It may include frequent monitoring and no immediate action. If the cancer is advanced, treatment might mean surgery and the removal of all or part of the prostate and surrounding tissue. Radiation is frequently used to blast cancer cells externally or radioactive seeds may be implanted in the prostate to eradicate the cancer cells. Whatever treatment or combination of treatments is chosen, it should be planned only after all options have been thoroughly investigated.



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