

FOOD MATTERS

WITH SUE RADD



Consultant
Nutritionist

FIGHTING CANCER

Cancer of the bowel is the second most common cause of cancer-related deaths in Australia and New Zealand. Yet many cases are preventable. By eating a bowel-protective diet and following these guidelines, you'll reduce your risk.*

1. Boost vegetable intake

Studies show that eating plenty of vegetables reduces the risk of developing bowel cancer. Raw salad vegetables, green vegetables (like spinach) and cruciferous vegetables (including cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower), are most beneficial. Most vegetables supply dietary fibre, carotenoids, vitamin C and folate, all of which are important in fighting off cancer.

2. Get physical

Second to improving your dietary intake, physical activity is the best thing you can do for good bowel health. But you need to remain active throughout your entire life. People with a low level of activity have higher rates of bowel cancer.

3. Avoid red meat

Eating red meat may increase the risk of developing bowel cancer, but the evidence is less conclusive

than the evidence for the effects of increasing your fresh vegetable intake and improving your exercise regimen. If you choose to eat red meat, limit your intake to less than 80 grams per day. That's about the size of three standard-sized matchboxes. Avoid grilling, barbecuing or frying meats, as such cooking methods have been shown to result in the production of cancer-causing substances called *heterocyclic aromatic amines*. Stewing, boiling and microwaving are the preferable methods.

4. Say no to alcohol

Some research suggests alcohol increases the risk of bowel cancer, so reduce your consumption. For a variety of other unrelated reasons, you're better off not drinking any at all.

Other factors thought to increase the risk of developing bowel cancer include being overweight and eating too much saturated fat and sugar.

See **page 20** for some cancer-preventing recipe ideas.

*World Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research, Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective, 1997.