



Family Focus - Nutrition and Health

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It's never too late to adopt healthy habits!

A research study conducted by researchers at the May Clinic Cancer Center concluded that women age 55 and older can cut their risk of cancer when they follow the American Institute for Cancer Research eating and lifestyle guidelines.

Researchers analyzed data from the Iowa Women's Healthy Study, looking at the diets and lifestyles of 29,564 women who were between the ages of 55 and 69 years. Of interest to the researchers was how many of 9 guidelines the women were following and how did that relate to their cancer risk.

They found that when women followed none or only 1 of the guidelines they had a 35 percent higher risk of developing cancer than the women who followed most of the guidelines. Also, when women followed none or only one of the guidelines they have a 43% higher risk of dying from cancer than the women who followed six to nine of the recommendations.

The nine guidelines used in the study were:

1. Maintain a maximum BMI (body mass index) of 25 and limit adult weight gain to no more than 11 pounds.
2. Engage in daily moderate and weekly vigorous physical activity.
3. Eat 5 or more servings of vegetables and fruits daily.
4. Eat 5 or more servings of whole grains, tubers like potatoes and cereals daily, and limit processed foods and refined sugars.
5. Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day for women.
6. Limit red meat to about 3 ounces daily.
7. Limit dietary fat, especially from foods of animal origin.
8. Limit sodium in foods and the use of table salt.
9. Do not smoke or chew tobacco.

Can you guess which guideline was followed by the lowest number of people. Unfortunately it was #5, eating 5 servings of vegetables and fruits daily. People often cite the high cost of fruits and vegetables as their reason for not eating more of these foods. However, a price analysis of 85 different vegetables and 69 different fruits showed that you can eat 5 servings a day for just 64 cents. This is especially true if you select some of the least expensive produce like carrots, cabbage, and sweet potatoes. It takes just a total of 2 ½ cups of vegetables and fruits to give you the 5 servings a day, so start working on this guideline now to lower your cancer risk.

The New American Plate

This new cookbook just published in March will help you increase whole grains and vegetables, while reducing saturated fat in your diet. Look for the cookbook in bookstores. In the meantime, try this recipe from the book. Whole grains, don't need to be boring.

Orange Rice Pilaf with Dried Fruit

- 3/4 cup chopped dried apricots, cherries or cranberries (or a combination)
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1 1/2 cups instant brown rice
- 3 Tbsp. chopped fresh flat leaf parsley, or 1 Tbsp. dried parsley
- 2 tsp orange zest
- Fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth

Cover dried fruit and raisins with hot water and soak for 5-10 minutes. Drain. In a large saucepan cook rice with fruits, parsley and zest in broth (using amount package directs). Remove from heat and fluff with a fork before serving.