

Living a Healthy Colon Lifestyle

Living a healthy colon lifestyle means eating foods and following health habits that can help prevent colorectal cancer and other diseases. Colorectal cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer deaths in the United States. But the following tips can help reduce your risk and promote a healthy colon.

Follow Healthy Eating Habits



Drink 8 eight-ounce glasses of water/day.



Increase fiber intake (fruits and vegetables such as raspberries, pears, apples, bananas, oranges, cooked artichoke, peas, broccoli, and corn).



Increase daily intake of whole grains (barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, pasta, or crackers).



Drink about 3 to 4 eight-ounce glasses of low-fat or fat-free milk daily.



Take in other foods with calcium such as kale, spinach, and collard greens.



Eat lean proteins such as skinless chicken or turkey and fish.



Tips to Promote a Healthy Colon



Limit red meat in your diet.



Reduce or eliminate processed meats (ex. sausage, bacon, or hotdogs).



Reduce excess sugar in your diet.



Eliminate fried foods.



Trade starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, lentils) for non-starchy vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes).



Limit the use of alcohol to no more than 1–2 drinks a day.



Get Regular Exercise

Types of Exercise for a Healthy Colon

Abdominal Stretching

Yoga

Walking 10–15 minutes a day

Aerobic exercise—running, cycling, and swimming



Exercise can

Help strengthen the digestive tract

Enhance the material in the gut that fights infection

Increase blood flow to muscles and digestive tract

Alleviate heartburn, gas, stomach cramps, and constipation

Other Healthy Colon Habits



Get screened for colorectal cancer if you're over 45 or high-risk.



Monitor weight.



Quit smoking.



Go to the bathroom when you have the urge.



Read labels on food.



Reduce stress.



Listen to your body—if something doesn't feel right, or you have concerns about your colon or digestive health, speak with your doctor.

Questions for the Doctor

1. What diet do you recommend to promote colon health?
2. What foods contain fiber?
3. When do you recommend I get screened for colorectal cancer?
4. How often should I have bowel movements?
5. What other suggestions do you have for me to keep my colon healthy?

Bottom Line

Just like any other part of your body, it's important to pay attention to your colon health. Healthy eating habits, exercise, getting recommended screenings, and living a healthy lifestyle can contribute to the health of your colon. If you want additional recommendations for how to promote a healthy colon, speak with your trusted doctor.



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