



American  
Institute for  
Cancer  
Research®

# AICR

the newsletter

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**LOOK INSIDE ▶ FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURES**



From Marilyn Gentry

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related death worldwide. And with colorectal cancer on the rise in young adults, it's more important than ever to put research dollars into this vital area of study. AICR continues to focus on how weight, nutrition and physical activity impact colorectal cancer risk and treatment.

On page 4, you'll learn about the link between a higher birthweight or body size during childhood and an increased risk of colorectal cancer in later life. On page 8, you'll find groundbreaking research on the benefits of exercise for colon cancer survivors.

Plus, there is limited but suggestive evidence that coffee reduces the risk of colon cancer. Learn more about the benefits of coffee and what to order at coffee shops with the handy infographic on page 5 (you won't believe how much sugar is in a large mocha swirl frozen coffee.)

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and continue to support AICR and our mission to fund research on cancer prevention and survivorship.

*Marilyn Gentry*



# FREE Publications from AICR

## ACUPUNCTURE IN CANCER CARE ▶

This brochure explains the use of acupuncture in cancer care and how to find a qualified practitioner.



## IMMUNOTHERAPY: UNLEASHING THE POWER WITHIN ▶

This brochure explains modern research on how the body's own immune system can recognize and fight cancer cells.



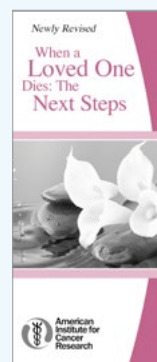
## REDUCE YOUR RISK OF COLORECTAL CANCER ▶

This brochure tells you the risk factors and steps to avoid this common but preventable disease.



## WHEN A LOVED ONE DIES: THE NEXT STEPS ▶

You'll find practical and valuable information for a time when you or someone close to you needs comforting direction.



**ORDER TODAY!** These free materials help you put AICR's science-based advice to work every day in making healthier choices. Your support makes AICR's life-saving research and education possible, so any gift will be greatly appreciated.

- 1. By phone:** call AICR toll-free at 1-800-843-8114 to order your free brochures.
- 2. By mail:** write to AICR, PO Box 97167, Washington, DC 20090-7167

## AICR IN THE NEWS

### CUP GLOBAL RESEARCH SHARED AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF NUTRITION 2025

AICR is part of the CUP Global research panel in conjunction with the World Cancer Research Fund. We were excited that our research was part of the 23rd edition of the International Congress of Nutrition (ICN), which was held in Paris on August 24-29, 2025. We shared ePosters on the CUP Global guidance on diet, nutrition and physical activity for those living with and beyond breast and colorectal cancer. You can find the CUP Global reports here:

<https://www.aicr.org/cancer-survival/cancer/breast-cancer/> and here: <https://www.aicr.org/cancer-survival/cancer/colorectal-cancer/>.



# Acupuncture in Cancer Care

*Learn how this alternative therapy bridges ancient wisdom with modern science.*

Some people with cancer may pair conventional medical therapies with complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices. Examples of CAM include yoga, supplements, massage and acupuncture.

When backed by sufficient research, some types of CAM become part of mainstream medicine. Acupuncture is a great example of this. The National Health Interview Survey shows that the use of acupuncture doubled between 2002 and 2022.

Acupuncture is popular because clinical research shows that it can be an effective treatment for several cancer-related symptoms. Here's what you need to know.

## What Is Acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a practice that applies thin needles, heat or pressure on various places on the body, which are known as acupuncture points. It is believed that acupuncture originated in China thousands of years ago.

**SAFETY FIRST:** Acupuncture is considered to be a safe therapy for cancer patients and cancer survivors when practiced by qualified practitioners. It does not have serious side effects or cause adverse events.

How acupuncture works remains an active topic of research. It has been proposed that the insertion of needles stimulate "qi" or energy flow, which may affect a person's emotional, mental and physical health. However, our modern understanding of anatomy shows the reported effects

are likely related to how the nervous system functions. Acupuncture guidelines for cancer care were published in 2024. Many leading cancer centers integrate acupuncture into their cancer care plans.

## What Is Acupuncture Used For?

Acupuncture can be used to relieve a range of cancer-related symptoms. Most research to date focuses on relief from nausea and vomiting, which may occur as a side effect from chemotherapy, radiation or surgery.

Research shows that acupuncture may also help with some other cancer-related side effects, such as:

- Pain
- Insomnia
- Cancer-related fatigue
- Sleep issues
- Dry mouth
- Lymphedema

Some studies also link acupuncture to very specific benefits for symptoms in certain types of cancer, such as hot flashes in breast cancer-related menopause, and dysphagia in nasopharyngeal cancer. You can work with your healthcare team to see if acupuncture may help with your specific symptoms.

## Learn More

To explore how acupuncture may fit your cancer care plan, order our brochure. It covers what the treatment feels like and how you can find a certified practitioner.



**YOU CAN RECEIVE A FREE COPY OF ACUPUNCTURE IN CANCER CARE: BRIDGING ANCIENT WISDOM WITH MODERN SCIENCE. ORDER IT USING THE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.**



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Office of Charities Registration, Albany, NY 12231. MICS 9632. Pennsylvania residents may obtain a copy of the official registration and financial information from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. AICR maintains its own mailing list.

Occasionally we rent this list or exchange lists with other organizations in order to maintain an active donor file to support AICR's services. If you do not wish to participate in this program, please let us know.

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# Body Size in Early Life Linked to Increased Colorectal Cancer Risk Later On

*Learn how healthy childhood habits make a difference.*

Having a higher birthweight or body size during childhood, adolescence or young adulthood is associated with an increased risk of colorectal cancer in later life.

That's the conclusion of a systematic review and meta-analysis of 37 published studies, which is part of World Cancer Research Fund International's Global Cancer Update Program (CUP Global). AICR is a partner in CUP Global.

Published in the *International Journal of Cancer*, the study was done at Wageningen University & Research in Wageningen, Netherlands. It is one of the first reviews that explored the research on how factors such as weight, height and body size in early life stages may affect colorectal cancer risk as we age.

## What Did the Research Show?

The results include:

- Young adults (18-25 years): Gaining extra weight in early adulthood matters. Every jump in BMI equal to about 5 points (for example, going from a BMI of 22 to 27) increased colorectal cancer risk by 12 percent.
- Adolescents (10-19 years): Having a higher BMI during the teen years was linked to a 5-18 percent higher risk of colorectal cancer.
- Birthweight: Being born heavier played a role too. Each extra kilogram (2.2 lbs) at birth was tied to a 9 percent increase in colorectal cancer risk.

## What Do These Results Mean?

The strength and novelty of the study is that the results were assessed by the CUP Global panel of experts. They concluded that there was strong evidence that higher birthweight, as well as higher BMI in early life, were causally associated with an increased risk of colorectal cancer in adulthood.

“Although the relationship between adult body size and colorectal cancer risk is well-documented, the potential influence of measures of body size during early life is less understood,” says Dr. Dieuwertje Kok, an associate professor of nutrition and cancer at Wageningen University & Research and one of the study researchers. “This study bridges the existing knowledge gap and enhances our understanding of how early life factors may affect colorectal cancer risk in adults.”

## Take Action: Healthy Lifestyle Habits

Dr. Nigel Brockton, PhD, VP of research at AICR, says that “understanding the impact of early life body weight on cancer risk later in life can be empowering. Lifestyle has a huge impact on our cancer risk, and a better understanding of our personal risks can help inform and motivate our adoption of healthy lifestyle habits.”

If you are raising children, instilling healthy lifestyle habits may help prevent cancer later on. Here are some steps you can take:

- Offer meals that include vegetables, fruits, whole grains and protein
- Save soda, sweets and salty snacks as occasional treats, not everyday staples
- Keep mealtimes relaxed and pleasant
- Do not use food as rewards or restrict food as punishment
- Instead of pressuring kids to eat, teach them to listen to their appetite and stop when full
- Minimize screens and sitting time. Have active play daily.
- Include children when grocery shopping and cooking



# Coffee and Cancer: What the Science Says

Drinking coffee is a healthy habit.  
It may help reduce cancer risk.

## Why Coffee May Be Protective

Coffee contains compounds that may help reduce cancer risk by:

- Protecting cells from damage
- Reducing inflammation
- Promoting self-destruction of damaged cells

The effects are the same for regular or decaf coffee.

### There is strong probable evidence that coffee reduces the risk of:

- Endometrial cancer
- Liver cancer

### There is limited but suggestive evidence that coffee reduces the risk of:

- Oral: mouth, pharynx and larynx cancer
- Skin cancer
- Colon cancer
- Prostate cancer

## How Much Coffee?

Protective benefits are seen with 2 to 4 cups per day



Switch to decaf after 400mg of caffeine, since too much caffeine can cause insomnia, rapid heartbeat and jitters



## How much caffeine is in your coffee?



1-4mg

Decaf  
1 cup



60-70mg

Instant  
1 cup



80-100mg

Brewed  
1 cup



150-230mg

Cold brew  
1 cup

## Make Better Coffee Choices

Choose plain coffee most often or add a bit of sugar (1-2 tsp) and milk.

Some coffee drinks have lots of cream, sugar or flavored syrup. AICR recommends cutting back on these very sugary drinks.

Choose wisely! Here's how coffee drinks compare:

Small beverage (hot = 10 oz. cold = 16 oz.)	Calories	Fat	Sugar
Black coffee	2 kcal	0g	0g
Coffee with 1 tbsp low fat milk and 1 tsp sugar	25 kcal	0g	4g (1 tsp)
Coffee with 1 tbsp cream and 1 tsp sugar	38 kcal	2g	4g (1 tsp)
Latte with skim milk and sugar	86 kcal	0g	13g (4 tsp)
Iced cappuccino with skim milk and sugar	110 kcal	0g	23g (6 tsp)
Coffee with vanilla syrup	110 kcal	0g	24g (6 tsp)
Caramel cold brew coffee with cold foam	200 kcal	2.5g	37g (9 tsp)
Butter pecan swirl frozen coffee with cream	520 kcal	17g	84g (21 tsp)

*This chart is for small 10 oz. (hot) or 16 oz. (cold) drinks. To compare, a large 32 oz. mocha swirl frozen coffee with cream has 990 calories, 35 grams of fat and 153 grams (38 tsp) of sugar.*

American Institute for Cancer Research

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# Forward Thinking for the Next Generation

Jimmy G. S. Ong, the youngest of six siblings, was born in Sacramento. His Chinese names, Gin and Silk, mean “to build” and “rock,” respectively. He believed his father named him correctly—building on solid ground.

After completing his education including an MBA, Jimmy taught elementary and junior high school in Los Angeles and Hawaii. Later, he taught accounting, business math and real estate at Chabot Community College in Hayward, CA. He was also certified as a real estate appraiser, journeyman carpenter and real estate broker.

Jimmy traveled extensively through China, Vietnam, Canada, Alaska, Mexico and Europe. But Jimmy met the love of his life closer to home, in Berkeley. According to Jimmy, the best day of his life was the day he married Muriel. Together, they raised four dogs—Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, and Lady MacBeth. Jimmy’s love of music is evident in their names.

But in 2014, everything changed. Jimmy was diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer and died that year. He left behind his wife of 48 years, Muriel H. C. Ong, and countless others whom he touched.

But that is not the end of Jimmy’s story. Jimmy believed in research for the future, for people who will develop cancer after him. He wrote in his will that a portion of his estate should support cancer research. Jimmy’s time between diagnosis and death was brief. He did not want that fate for others. “I’m doing this, so the next generation won’t have to,” Jimmy said. “I know what the AICR is doing will prolong many people’s lives.”

Thanks to Jimmy’s generosity, the Institute has established the Jimmy G. S. Ong Memorial Fund for Cancer Research to support research each year. We are so grateful to Jimmy for making this lasting gift and to Muriel for sharing his story.



**YOU CAN RECEIVE A FREE COPY OF WHEN A LOVED ONE DIES: THE NEXT STEPS. ORDER IT USING THE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.**

## ASK THE FINANCIAL EXPERT...

**Q:** I have been making gifts from my IRAs to AICR for several years. I read recently that I can use IRA funds to establish a charitable gift annuity with AICR. Is this in addition to or in place of the outright gifts?

**A:** We appreciate your support of AICR programs through your annual qualified charitable distributions (QCDs). Outright gifts up to \$100,000 annually have been allowed since 2006, but the ability to fund a charitable remainder trust or charitable gift annuity was only introduced in 2023. Thanks to inflation adjustments, the amount given annually has now risen to \$105,000 and the amount that can pass to a charitable gift annuity is \$53,000. It is possible to do both, with a one-time gift of up to \$53,000 to a gift annuity and the remaining \$52,000 passing outright.

The gift annuity can make payments to the donor and/or spouse for life, beginning in the year of the gift. All payments from the gift annuity are fully taxed. Although there is no income tax charitable deduction for a QCD, if the gifts take the place of required minimum distributions on which you would otherwise be taxed, you avoid that tax, resulting in tax savings.

**Questions?** Please contact AICR at 1-800-843-8114.

# Unleashing the Power Within with Immunotherapy

## Learn how immunotherapy offers promise in cancer treatment.

Immunotherapy is a groundbreaking cancer treatment that helps the body's own immune system recognize and fight cancer cells. It causes fewer side effects than traditional treatment and has led to longer survival rates.

### What Is Immunotherapy?

Immunotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that helps the immune system recognize and attack cancer cells. Immunotherapy can be given:

- Directly into a vein
- As an injection just under the skin
- Topically applied to the skin
- Orally in pill or capsule form

The treatment will depend on the type of cancer. For example, injections under the skin are used to treat certain types of lung cancer, while topical creams are used to treat some skin cancers.

### How Does Immunotherapy Work?

Our immune system protects our body from being attacked by foreign substances that cause disease. Cancer cells develop from healthy cells within our body, which can “trick” our immune system into not recognizing them as harmful. Even when an immune response is activated by cancer cells, it is often too weak to mount a successful attack. Cancer cells can “hide” from the immune system by releasing substances that make them unrecognizable.

Different types of immunotherapy work by:

- Elevating the immune system's ability to recognize and kill cancer cells
- Using man-made substances called monoclonal antibodies that mimic our bodies' immune proteins
- Reprogramming normal immune cells to recognize and destroy cancer cells

- Using vaccines that trigger an immune response to target cancer cells
- Carrying radiation or chemotherapy molecules to cancer cells via turning on the immune system

### Better Survival Rates

One exciting aspect of immunotherapy is longer survival, even in the advanced stages of cancer. While not every patient responds to immunotherapy, the results may be life-changing for those who do.

One study found that 43 percent of previously-untreated advanced melanoma patients treated with a combination of immunotherapy drugs were still alive after 10 years. That's a marked improvement over past survival rates.

Another study showed that patients with liver cancer who received combination immunotherapy instead of traditional targeted therapy lived twice as long, with 20 percent alive at five years (previously unheard of).

### What's Next?

Ongoing research holds promise for using immunotherapy in earlier-stage cancers and in a wider range of cancer types. Researchers are also looking at the role of diet and physical activity. Studies show that exercise and higher-fiber diets may improve immunotherapy response.

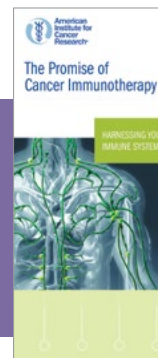
Immunotherapy is now recognized as one of five major types of cancer treatment, alongside:

- Surgery
- Radiation
- Chemotherapy
- Targeted therapy

Immunotherapy works differently from traditional treatments. It harms fewer healthy cells, lessening side effects and improving quality of life for patients.



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF IMMUNOTHERAPY IN CANCER TREATMENT, AICR HAS PREPARED A SPECIAL PUBLICATION, *HARNESSING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM: THE PROMISE OF CANCER IMMUNOTHERAPY*. YOU CAN ORDER IT USING THE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.**



# New Study Shows Benefits of Physical Activity for Colon Cancer Survivors



*Exercise after chemotherapy links to a 28 percent lower risk of colon cancer recurrence.*

A new study called the CO21 CHALLENGE Trial showed that exercise after colon cancer treatment resulted in longer disease-free survival.

Colon cancer survivors who took part in a three-year structured exercise program had a 28 percent lower risk of cancer recurrence or a second cancer. They also had a 37 percent lower risk of death compared to usual care. This is big news!

These findings were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

## What Was Studied?

The CO21 CHALLENGE Trial pulled back the curtain on a cancer-fighting weapon that has been hiding in plain sight: physical activity. The results showed improvement in disease-free survival and overall survival in colon cancer survivors in the aerobic exercise intervention group.

This trial is the first gold standard randomized control trial to show what has long been hinted at from observational studies: exercise is very beneficial. Observational research also showed im-

provements in survival linked to physical activity. However, observational studies are limited and do not show cause and effect.

This new study is stronger and more beneficial. The CO21 CHALLENGE trial confirms the clinical benefits that had been reported from observational studies.

## How Does This Study Connect to AICR?

WCRF International (of which AICR is a partner) has done extensive reviews through its flagship Global Cancer Update Programme (CUP Global).

The CUP Global reviews look at the extent to which diet, nutrition and physical activity impact people with breast or colorectal cancer with regards to:

- Cancer-specific mortality
- All-cause mortality
- Risk of cancer recurrence
- Health-related quality of life

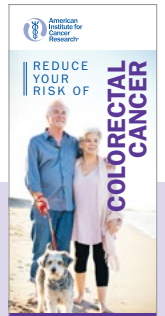
The CUP Global analysis compared highest to lowest levels of activity. We found that overall mortality was reduced by 23 to 40 percent depending on physical activity exposure. The effect sizes in the CO21 CHALLENGE are remarkably well aligned with the CUP Global analyses of observational studies.

## Next Steps

AICR has recently funded a project that is linked to the CHALLENGE Trial. It is being led by Dr. Kristin Campbell at the University of British Columbia in Canada. It will look at how muscle and fat tissue respond to exercise and how that might contribute to the observed survival benefits. More to come.



**YOU CAN RECEIVE A FREE COPY OF REDUCE YOUR RISK OF COLORECTAL CANCER. ORDER IT USING THE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.**



With seven percent gains, you can see that exercise compares very favorably with other approved therapies (medications) in terms of absolute overall survival gain.

## Comparing exercise to other therapies

Intervention	Disease	Absolute Overall Survival Gains	Type of Therapy
Adjuvant Exercise	Colon	7% at 8 years	Lifestyle
Adjuvant Oxaliplatin	Colon	5% at 10 years	Chemotherapy
Consolidation Durvalumab	Non-small cell lung cancer	10% at 5 years	Immunotherapy
Adjuvant Trastuzumab	Breast	5% at 5 years	Targeted therapy