



American  
Institute for  
Cancer  
Research®

# AICR

the newsletter

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**LOOK INSIDE ▶ FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURES**





From Marilyn Gentry

As summer settles in, bringing longer days and quieter moments, we invite you to pause and enjoy the pages of this newsletter. Inside, you'll find thoughtful stories that offer both inspiration and insight into cancer prevention and survivorship.

AICR remains dedicated to funding cancer research, and this issue highlights several of our grantees while sharing more about the work made possible by you, our donors.

On page 7, you'll read about four researchers working on projects that support children and adolescents with cancer. On page 8, you'll meet AICR grantee Dr. Jennifer Ligibel, who is looking at the impact of menopause on weight loss in premenopausal breast cancer survivors.

You will also find practical advice from dietitians about building satisfying, protein-rich snacks. Flip to page 4 for 15 delicious snacks ideas.

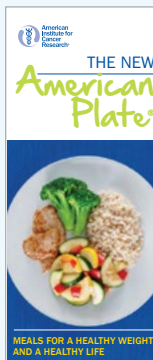
Thank you for your continued support of AICR's mission to fund research on cancer prevention and survivorship.



# FREE Publications from AICR

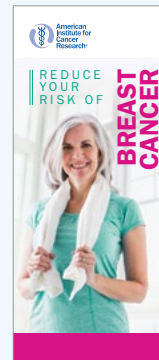
## THE NEW AMERICAN

**PLATE** ▶ Learn about AICR's simple model for a mostly plant-based diet that can reduce your cancer risk.



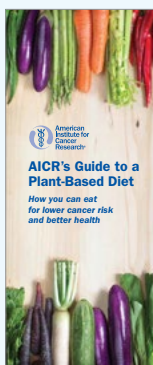
## REDUCE YOUR RISK OF BREAST CANCER

▶ In this brochure you will find a summary of the facts, symptoms, screening steps and prevention tips for breast cancer



## AICR'S GUIDE TO A PLANT-BASED

**DIET** ▶ Discover the wide range of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, pulses and other delicious plant foods that AICR recommends eating for lower cancer risk.



## THOUGHTFUL PLANNING FOR HEALTH CARE

**DECISIONS** ▶ This brochure provides helpful guidance as you make decisions about health-care choices, including living wills, durable power of attorney and advance directives.



**LIMITED QUANTITIES—ORDER TODAY!** Your support makes AICR's life-saving research and education possible, so any gift will be greatly appreciated.

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2. Return it in the envelope provided to: AICR, PO Box 97167, Washington, DC 20090-7167
3. Or, order by phone: 1-800-843-8114

## AICR IN THE NEWS

Dr. Giota Mitrou, the executive director of research and policy at AICR and WCRF, recently met with **Dr. Kristin Altwegg**, the recipient of the Marilyn Gentry Fellowship. Dr. Altwegg is pictured outside the lab at the University of North Carolina, which is named for AICR and WCRF. With fellowship funding, Dr. Altwegg will study whether GLP-1 weight loss drugs influence obesity-related cancer risk.



Dr. Kristin Altwegg

# Vegetarian Diets Lower Risk of Some Cancer Types

A major new study funded by World Cancer Research Fund (AICR's partner organization) has revealed that vegetarian diets may help reduce the risk of specific cancer types.

This could help many people stay healthy, since there are 8-10 million vegetarians in the United States and interest in plant-based eating is growing globally.

## About the Study

The study was led by scientists at Oxford Population Health's Cancer Epidemiology Unit. They pooled data from more than 1.8 million people across three continents through the Cancer Risk in Vegetarians Consortium, the largest ever study of non-meat diets and cancer risk.

They compared the risk of 17 different cancers across five diet groups: meat eaters, poultry eaters (who do not eat red or processed meat), pescatarians (who eat fish), vegetarians (who eat dairy and/or eggs) and vegans (who eat no animal products).

Researchers found that vegetarians had a lower risk of pancreatic, breast, prostate and kidney cancers compared to meat eaters.

## Other Study Results

The full findings of this study were published in February 2026 in the *British Journal of Cancer*.

Vegetarian dietary patterns were not associated with a statistically significant difference in risk for colorectal, stomach, liver, lung (among never smokers), endometrial, ovarian, oral, pharyngeal, bladder, esophageal adenocarcinoma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma or leukemia.

Fish eaters had lower risks of breast, kidney and colorectal cancers. Poultry eaters were found to have a lower risk of prostate cancer.

Interestingly, people following a vegan diet had a statistically significant higher risk of colorectal

cancer when compared with meat eaters. And vegetarians had nearly double the risk of squamous cell carcinoma of the esophagus.

Aurora Perez Cornago, principal investigator of the study and former Associate Professor at Oxford Population Health, explains: "The higher risk of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma in vegetarians and bowel cancer in vegans may relate to lower intake of certain nutrients more abundant in animal foods. Additional research is needed to understand what is driving the differences in cancer risk found in our study."

## Compared with meat eaters, vegetarians had:

- 21% lower risk of pancreatic cancer
- 9% lower risk of breast cancer
- 12% lower risk of prostate cancer
- 28% lower risk of kidney cancer
- 31% lower risk of multiple myeloma

## Build a Healthy Eating Pattern

- Create meals around whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables by following AICR's New American Plate.
- Limit fast foods, ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks.
- Limit red meat to no more than 3 portions a week or about 12-18 ounces (cooked).
- Avoid processed meats that have been smoked, cured, salted, fermented or had preservatives added to them. This includes hot dogs, bacon, sausage and deli meats.



**FREE OFFER: LEARN HOW TO CREATE BALANCED, CANCER-FIGHTING MEALS WITH THE NEW AMERICAN PLATE. SEE ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.**





# Fifteen Snacks Recommended by Dietitians

*Learn how pairing fiber and protein helps you create satisfying snacks.*

Snacking is a smart way to fuel your body and maintain steady energy throughout the day. The right snacks help bridge the gap between meals while adding important nutrients.

Research shows that snacks provide about one-third of the average person's daily calorie intake, so it makes sense to choose nourishing foods instead of sugary or salty treats.

## What Is a Healthy Snack?

A snack combination with protein and fiber helps you feel full for longer, so you are less likely to keep snacking or overeat. For example, some great combinations include:

Protein	Fiber
Peanut butter	Banana
Yogurt	Berries
Eggs	Whole grain bread
Cottage cheese	Cantaloupe

## What Do Dietitians Snack On?

AICR asked dietitians about their favorite snacks. Here are the top snack ideas that emerged.

### Protein from Dairy and Eggs

Protein is filling, so yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs and cheese were top snack options. Plus, there is probable evidence that dairy products decrease the risk of colorectal cancer. Try:

- Greek yogurt parfait with low-sugar granola and fresh berries: Kristi Ruth, RDN, CNSC, LDN
- Everything bagel seasoning on hard boiled eggs and cucumber slices: Rachel White, RD, LD
- Blended cottage cheese and ranch seasoning paired with vegetables: Taylor Janulewicz RDN, LD
- Cucumber, cherry tomatoes and mozzarella pearls with balsamic vinegar: Chelsea Hardy, MS, RD, LD
- Grapes and cheese, such as gouda or cheddar: Brittany Lear, MS, RD, LD, CNSC

### Plant-Based Options

These snacks are nutrient-rich from chickpeas, beans, nuts and seeds, and still contain the winning protein and fiber combo. Try:

- Popcorn topped with herbs mixed with crunchy roasted chickpeas: Meghan Laszlo MS, RD, CSO
- Cucumbers or colorful peppers with hummus: Cheryl Harris, MPH, RD
- Dates or dried figs with almonds: Karen Vincek, MS, RD, LD
- Air-fried spicy chickpeas with cucumbers: Moushumi Mukherjee, MS, RDN
- Crunchy peanut butter on dried dates: Rosie Schwartz, RD, FDC.

### Vegetables and Fruits

Vegetables and fruits are high in fiber, vitamins and phytochemicals, which may help decrease cancer risk. Try:

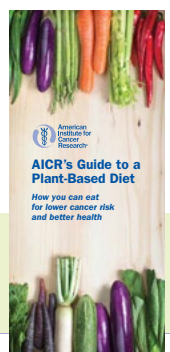
- Bell peppers dipped in hummus: Brianne Okuszka, MPPD, RDN
- Apple with peanut butter or almond butter: Talia Hauser, RD, LDN
- Edamame pods or roasted edamame paired with seasonal fruits: Cindy Chou, RDN, chef
- Dry-roasted edamame with crisp cucumber and fresh herbs: Vandana Sheth, RDN, CDCES, FAND
- Whole grain bread with peanut butter, banana and chia seeds: Alyssa Smolen, MS, RDN, CDN

### Avoid Snacking Pitfalls

Consuming nourishing snacks is a winning idea. But even nutritious whole foods can lead to weight gain over time if portion sizes are too large or snacks are eaten too frequently. Most of the snacks listed above have 150-250 calories, give or take. Dietitians may recommend snacks once or twice per day, depending on your personal needs.



**FREE OFFER: ORDER AICR'S GUIDE TO A PLANT-BASED DIET. SEE ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.**





# Nutrition and Physical Activity:

## Part of Your Cancer Treatment Plan



**From day one, nutrition and physical activity should be considered alongside treatment for improved outcomes.**

After a cancer diagnosis, eating well and being active can help you throughout chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. Aim to follow AICR's Cancer Prevention Recommendations during treatment.\*

### ACTIVITY CAN HELP:

- Reduce symptoms of treatment-related side effects
- Elevate mood
- Reduce anxiety and depression
- Improve sleep
- Boost energy levels and reduce fatigue
- Maintain physical functioning
- Support bone health
- Improve quality of life



### NUTRITION CAN HELP:

- Support faster healing after treatments
- Lower your risk of infection
- Support the immune system
- Build up strength and energy
- Tolerate side effects from treatments
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Replace or retain nutrients that are stored in the body
- Reduce the risk of cancer recurrence



**\*Work with your cancer health-care team to set up your personalized activity and nutrition plans.**

**Follow AICR's Cancer Prevention Recommendations after diagnosis  
for beneficial effects on survivorship and quality of life.**

# Turning Endurance into Impact

*Cancer survivor Tim Murphy turns Ironman endurance into a mission to fund cancer research.*



Tim Murphy

Indiana resident and Notre Dame Fighting Irish alum Tim Murphy has taken on the fight against cancer, channeling his strength and determination into fundraising.

A proud cancer survivor and accomplished athlete, Tim has completed 13 Ironman triathlons. His races are more than personal milestones. They are opportunities to give back for the care and outcomes that have shaped his own journey.

## Ironman Power

A traditional Ironman race spans 140.6 miles including a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run. Tim has turned that challenge into a powerful fundraising mission, aiming to raise \$140,600 across more than 14 races. That's \$1,000 for every mile.

Through this initiative, Tim has inspired his supporters (known as "Team T-Money"), to join him in giving to causes that are close to his heart. To date, Tim has raised more than \$110,000 of his \$140,600 goal.

AICR is grateful to be among the beneficiaries of Tim's commitment. Funds raised will help advance our work to reduce cancer risk and improve outcomes.

Tim's dedication reflects a shared commitment to reducing cancer risk through physical activity, nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight, while still enjoying life's simple pleasures, like a scoop of ice cream. Beyond racing, Tim and his wife Lynn opened MURPHY'S Ice Cream Shoppe in spring 2024.

Tim's journey is a testament to perseverance, purpose and the power of community. We are proud to count him among our supporters and wish him continued success in the miles ahead.

## 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 the support you have shown for 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.

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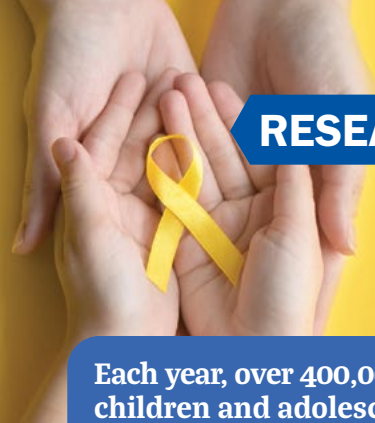
AICR maintains its own mailing list. Occasionally we rent this list or exchange lists with other organizations in order to maintain an active donor file to support AICR's services. If you do not wish to participate in this program, please let us know.

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# Global Research Is Transforming Childhood Cancer Care



Each year, over 400,000 children and adolescents are diagnosed with cancer. The World Health Organization's Global Childhood Cancer Initiative aims to increase global survival rates to at least 60 percent by 2030, while improving quality of life for children with cancer everywhere.

*From AI-driven insights to lifestyle interventions, these studies focus on improving long-term outcomes for children with cancer.*

Many of the research projects funded by AICR and our partner organizations within the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) International focus on childhood cancer. The research projects scan the globe and explore different angles, but all ultimately help children and adolescents with cancer, plus their families and caregivers.

Here are some studies that are being funded within the WCRF network:

## Real-Time Tracking of Environments and Well Being in Young Adults with Cancer

Dr. Katie Darabos is studying how the daily environments of young adult cancer survivors shape their stress and overall well-being. Using GPS and real-time surveys, her team tracks how different settings influence choices, health behaviors and stress levels. By identifying the types of neighbourhoods or daily settings that increase stress or make healthy choices harder, this research will help pinpoint potential high risk environments, then develop mobile interventions that support survivors when and where they need it most.



Dr. Katie Darabos

## Smart Scans, Stronger Futures: AI and Body Composition in Pediatric Cancer Survivorship

Dr. Paul Yi is developing an AI powered tool to analyze routine CT scans and uncover how changes in body composition, such as muscle and fat levels, relate to treatment outcomes in children with cancer. Right now, it is challenging to predict which survivors of childhood cancer will face serious health impacts down the line. By revealing patterns that clinicians may not otherwise detect, the insights from this work may help cancer survivors achieve better long-term health, reduce complications



Dr. Paul Yi

and improve quality of life.

## Diet and Exercise to Improve Treatment Outcomes in B cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia

Dr. Etan Orgel is testing whether targeted diet and physical activity interventions can reduce obesity risk during treatment for B cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Obesity increases the chance of chemotherapy being less effective and the disease returning in those being treated for it. This study aims to identify practical strategies that make chemotherapy more effective and improve survival outcomes for children living with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.



Dr. Etan Orgel

## Digital Technologies to Understand and Improve Physical Activity in Adolescents and Young Adults

Dr. Lisa Schwartz is using innovative tools, such as wearable activity monitors and real time surveys, to understand factors that influence physical activity in adolescents and young adults with cancer. By capturing the barriers that prevent young people from being active, this research aims to help them be more physically active. This may ease their treatment symptoms and improve their mood and quality of life.



Dr. Lisa Schwartz

AICR Executive Director of Research and Policy, Dr. Giota Mitrou, says: "It is heartening to see global attention focused on children whose lives are changed by cancer. We are proud to support studies on how nutrition, exercise and other lifestyle factors influence cancer survivorship and improve lives."

# Empowering Breast Cancer Survivors Through Research



Dr. Jennifer Ligibel, MD

*AICR grantee Dr. Jennifer Ligibel studies exercise, weight control and breast cancer.*

AICR grantee Dr. Jennifer Ligibel, MD, is a medical oncologist and cancer researcher at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. She began her career at a time when most breast cancer patients were treated with chemotherapy and radiation, years before targeted therapy or lifestyle interventions.

Her patients would ask “what can I do to help myself?” but she had little to tell them. “I found that unsatisfying,” says Dr. Ligibel. “Patients wanted something they had control over and could be an active partner in their own care.”

Around the same time, early studies showed that people who exercised had a lower risk of breast cancer recurrence compared to people who didn’t exercise. Dr. Ligibel found that fascinating, and a spark was ignited. She wondered if lifestyle modifications could influence the risk of recurrence or mortality. Dr. Ligibel’s first study looked at whether exercise could lower insulin in women being treated for breast cancer.

## Important Breast Cancer Research

Women with obesity have a higher risk of breast cancer recurrence compared to leaner women. Dr. Ligibel’s team created a large-scale trial to test if a two-year weight loss intervention, including nutrition and exercise advice, could reduce the risk of recurrence.

While the trial is ongoing, one noted outcome is that younger pre-menopausal women lose less weight than older women. No one knows why. The current AICR-funded project will investigate if it is due to menopause status, hormones, lifestyle, behaviour or something else.

## A Rewarding Career

Dr. Ligibel recently received a letter in the mail from a cancer survivor that she had never met. The letter contained a 2012 newspaper article about Dr.

## Current AICR-Funded Research

Pre-menopausal women are at increased risk for weight gain after breast cancer compared to post-menopausal women. Obesity and weight gain after diagnosis are associated with poor outcomes for women with early onset breast cancer. This research will assess whether the onset of menopause, caused by the cancer treatment, is associated with greater weight gain and reduced weight loss. Dr. Ligibel and her mentee Dr. Megan Tesch will assess menstrual patterns and hormone levels in pre-menopausal breast cancer patients, with overweight and obesity, who were enrolled in a weight loss intervention study. The ultimate goal is to figure out why weight is a struggle in this age group so better targeted interventions can be created.

Ligibel’s research, which highlighted the importance of nutrition and physical activity as part of cancer care. This stranger clipped the article and carries it with her daily, crediting the advice with helping get through her cancer treatment. The letter said, “I thought it would be helpful for you to know how much your words affect people you have never met.”

This is exactly why AICR counts on your support to fund researchers like Dr. Ligibel, because their work doesn’t just advance science; it reaches beyond the lab to inspire hope, empower patients and change lives in ways they may never fully see.



**FREE OFFER: ORDER *REDUCE YOUR RISK OF BREAST CANCER* FOR HELPFUL FACTS AND TIPS. SEE ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 2.**

