American Institute for Cancer Research®

AICR the newsletter

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HOW DOES Early Life SHAPE CANCER RISK? ▸ 3

RESEARCH: HOW Alcohol INCREASES COLORECTAL CANCER RISK ▸ 7

Food Swaps TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF CANCER ▸ 4

WHY Cancer Survivors SHOULD FOLLOW AICR CANCER PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS ▸ 8

LOOK INSIDE ▸ FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURES

From Marilyn Gentry

AICR's work is made possible by you, our donors. Your support helps fund innovative cancer research while allowing us to share the latest evidence-based findings with you in the *AICR Newsletter*. We hope this issue informs and inspires you.

On page 3, learn about life course research, an emerging field exploring how factors early in life can influence cancer risk in adulthood. AICR is helping advance research in this promising area.

One pages 4 and 5, we share tips from dietitians on how to make meaningful food substitutions to help reduce your cancer risk. The infographic provides many smart ideas for food swaps.

If you are a cancer survivor, turn to page 8 to read about a new and groundbreaking study. It shows that cancer survivors who more closely followed the AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations were less likely to die from any cause during the study period.

Thank you for your continued commitment to AICR's mission. Your support advances life-changing research and helps bring trusted, evidence-based information to people everywhere.

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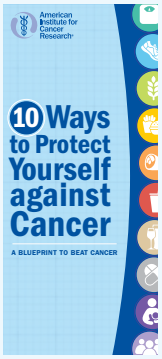
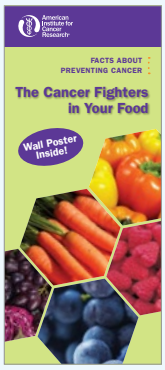
FREE Publications from AICR

10 WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST CANCER ▶ This brochure explains how following the AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations can be a blueprint for preventing cancer and its recurrence.

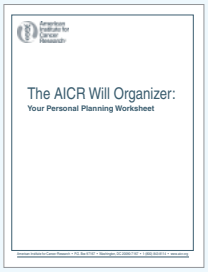


THE CANCER FIGHTERS IN YOUR FOOD ▶ This brochure sums up the latest information about cancer-fighting compounds that are found in plant-based foods.



REDUCE YOUR RISK OF COLORECTAL CANCER ▶ This brochure explains the risk factors and provides steps to help you prevent this common but preventable disease.

WILL ORGANIZER ▶ This helpful document can save you time and money when you visit your attorney about your will.



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

In June 2026, AICR's Scientific Advisor Dr. Fiona Malcomson, PhD, attended the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Annual Meeting and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting. She attended lectures, learned about new cancer research and met with past and current AICR grantees. Her insights into both events can be found on the AICR blog at **www.aicr.org/blog**.

Dr. Malcomson and AICR grantee Dr. Kristin Campbell at ACSM.

COVER PHOTO BY

How Does Early Life Shape Cancer Risk?

Life course research examines how exposures and experiences from before birth through late adulthood shape health and well-being later.

AICR research often focuses on how nutrition, physical activity and body weight influence cancer risk in adults. But what if some of the answers lie in the early years before adulthood?

AICR and World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) International's Global Cancer Update Program (Cup Global) is now focusing on life course research. This fascinating area of study looks at how risk factors during birth, childhood, teen and young adult years change our risk of developing cancer in adulthood.

The aim is to better understand how exposure to different risk factors at different times in our life influence cancer risk. We are also exploring whether there are critical windows during our lifetime that affect cancer risk.

Assessing Risk Over Many Years

By looking at factors in our early years, we can better understand how diet, nutrition, physical activity and body weight affect cancer risk throughout our lives.

AICR and WCRF International are currently studying life course research in the following areas:

- Early life measurement and colorectal cancer: How birth weight, birth length and childhood body weight impact colorectal cancer risk in adulthood (see text box)
- Early life measurement and breast cancer: How birth weight, birth length and childhood body weight impact breast cancer risk in adulthood
- Alcohol and breast cancer: How alcohol consumption during adolescence and young adulthood influences breast cancer risk later in life
- Menstruation: Factors that influence the age of your first period and when puberty occurs and how these may affect cancer risk later.

PHOTO BY RAWPIXEL.COM/ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS

In May 2025, the first CUP Global life course meta-analysis paper was published by the *International Journal of Cancer*. Entitled "Early-life anthropometry and colorectal cancer risk in adulthood," the paper looked at 37 published studies on this topic.

The results showed that increased birthweight and body size in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood are linked with future colorectal cancer risk. Each one kilogram (2.2 lb) increase in birthweight was associated with a 9 percent increased risk of colorectal cancer.

Consider the Whole Lifespan

Life course research focuses on when exposures happen across time. By studying earlier stages of life, we have more chances to prevent or change harmful exposures before they become too fixed and harder to change.

This type of research is valuable because it considers the entire lifespan rather than a snapshot at a point in time. This allows us to gain a broader understanding of what shapes health and cancer risk.

Future Outlook

Life course research is progressing rapidly. Researchers are finding new ways to analyze long-term data of large populations. This can help them better understand cancer risk factors.

However, important gaps remain in parts of the world where there is limited high-quality cancer data available, meaning some populations are still not well studied.

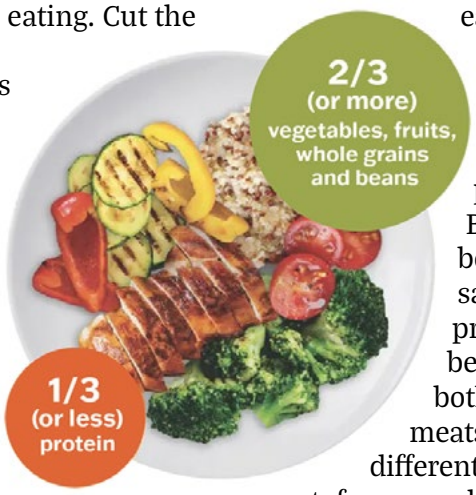
YOU CAN ORDER A FREE COPY OF *10 WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST CANCER*. SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 2.

The Power of Simple Food Swaps

Healthy food substitutions can help you build an eating pattern to lower cancer risk.

When people think about eating for better health, they often focus on what to stop eating. Cut the bacon. Skip the soda. Drink less alcohol. These are sensible goals backed by strong scientific evidence.

But here's a question we don't ask often enough: If I cut something out, what will I eat instead? Reducing cancer risk isn't only about removing less-healthful foods. It's also about replacing them with foods that nourish your body and support long-term health.



Now you can focus on swapping in nutritious foods when your diet falls short of this healthy dietary pattern. For example, eating less red and processed meat is a smart move for cancer prevention. But replacing bologna with salami doesn't provide much benefit because both are processed meats. Choosing a different protein altogether, such as chicken or tofu, can make a much bigger difference.

Scientists estimate that around 40 percent of cancer cases are preventable through healthy lifestyle choices, including eating well, being active and maintaining a healthy weight. Research shows that a dietary pattern filled with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans may help reduce cancer risk.

Think of the Bigger Picture

Rather than focusing on individual foods, start by considering your overall eating pattern. That's what you eat consistently across meals and snacks over weeks and months, and it has the greatest influence on long-term health and cancer risk.

AICR's New American Plate helps you create a healthy dietary pattern. The goal is to fill at least two-thirds of your plate with plant foods including vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes (such as beans and soy foods). The remaining one-third is for protein-rich foods such as fish, poultry, dairy foods or tofu.

Instead of sandwiches with processed deli meats like salami or bologna, try:

- Leftover grilled or baked chicken or turkey
- Mashed tuna or salmon
- Egg salad
- Marinated grilled tofu
- Peanut butter
- Hummus

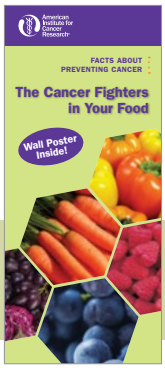
For more heathy food swaps, see the infographic on page 5.

Start with One Swap

If you are going to make a meaningful food swap, don't change everything at once. Small changes that you can stick with are far more valuable than dramatic overhauls that may not last very long.

Start by identifying one thing you'd like to cut and then asking yourself, "what can I eat instead?" Then, choose a replacement that adds fiber, protein or vitamins. Build from there once the new habit starts to feel normal.

Every vegetable you add, every refined grain you replace with a whole grain, every sugary drink you swap for water–these choices add up. Together, they create an eating pattern that research links to lower cancer risk, better weight management and improved overall health.



YOU CAN ORDER A FREE COPY OF *THE CANCER FIGHTERS IN YOUR FOOD*. SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 2.

NEW AMERICAN PLATE PHOTO BY ENRICH CREATIVE; EGG PHOTO BY KOLESNIKOVSERG/ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS

It's not just what you remove, it's what you replace it with!

FOOD SWAPS

to Lower Cancer Risk

When people think about eating for better health, they often focus on what to stop eating. But if you cut certain foods, what you replace them with matters. For example, if you swap a bag of chips with ice cream, it doesn't create a healthy eating pattern.

The next time you decide to cut something out, ask yourself: What should I have Instead? That answer might matter more than the cut itself.

INSTEAD OF: Sandwiches with processed deli meats

TRY:
- Chicken or turkey
- Mashed tuna or salmon
- Egg salad

INSTEAD OF: Red or processed meat

TRY:
- Beans or lentils
- Fish or seafood
- Poultry

INSTEAD OF: An alcoholic drink

TRY:
- Alcohol-free wine or beer
- Sparkling water with a splash of fruit juice
- Water with cucumber and mint

INSTEAD OF: French fries

TRY:
- Roasted sweet potato wedges
- Baked potato slices brushed with olive oil
- Roasted chickpeas

INSTEAD OF: Salty chips or pretzels

TRY:
- A small handful of nuts or seeds
- Air-popped popcorn
- Roasted chickpeas

INSTEAD OF: Cookies

TRY:
- Fresh fruits
- Frozen grapes or banana slices
- Dried fruits, such as raisins

INSTEAD OF: White rice or white pasta

TRY:
- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Oats

TIP

American Institute for Cancer Research®

Your overall diet matters more than any single food or meal. Scientists estimate that around 40 percent of cancer cases are preventable through healthy lifestyle choices, including eating well, being active and maintaining a healthy weight.

Going the Distance for Cancer Prevention:

Meet Dr. Jonathan Bricker

Dr. Jonathan Bricker

For more than two decades, Dr. Jonathan Bricker, PhD, has helped people make healthier choices to reduce cancer risk. As a clinical psychologist and the Endowed Chair in Cancer Prevention at Fred Hutch Cancer Center, he and his HABIT lab develop, test, and disseminate evidence-based tools that help people quit smoking and make sustainable changes in nutrition and physical activity.

Now, Dr. Bricker is putting those principles into practice as he trains for the 2026 Berlin Marathon with Team AICR, our community of endurance athletes who raise funds for cancer research.

Making Progress

For Dr. Bricker, lasting behavior change isn't simply about willpower–it's about living according to your values, even when it's uncomfortable. "Meaningful progress rarely comes from dramatic changes," he says. "It comes from small actions repeated over time."

A runner since age 12, Dr. Bricker discovered the marathon's deeper meaning after completing his first marathon. "It clicked that it's not about me," he recalls. "It's about the larger community of runners that I was joining."

Running to raise funds for AICR felt like a natural extension of his personal and professional mission. After more than two decades researching behavior change and cancer prevention–including smoking cessation, nutrition, physical activity and weight –he wanted every mile to support something bigger than himself.

As he prepares for the Berlin Marathon, Dr. Bricker hopes his journey will inspire others to embrace healthy challenges while supporting cancer research. "Science is a marathon," he says. "You start gradually. You stay consistent. You focus on your values."

AICR is grateful for Dr. Bricker's commitment to advancing cancer prevention, both through his research and on the road.

ASK THE FINANCIAL EXPERT...

Q: My mom is completing some estate planning and would like to include a gift to AICR. Is a revocable living trust better than a will for this purpose?

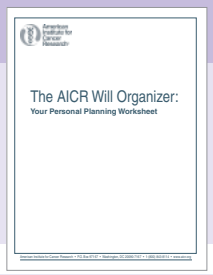
A: A revocable living trust is a way for a person to hold all their assets in one account during their lifetime. The trust can spell out plans for distribution of the trust assets at the time of one's death. All of the assets your mom owns should be titled in the name of the trust. Your mother can serve as trustee if she can manage her finances. A successor trustee should also be included and can step in if she becomes incapacitated. They then distribute her assets from the trust when she is no longer living.

Many people choose revocable living trusts because the trust assets are not part of their probate estate. The level of privacy that offers is comforting to many people as they make their estate plans.

Your mother should have a "pour over" will that directs all assets not held in the trust to be added to the trust and distributed under its provisions.

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

YOU CAN ORDER A FREE COPY OF *THE AICR WILL ORGANIZER*. SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 2.



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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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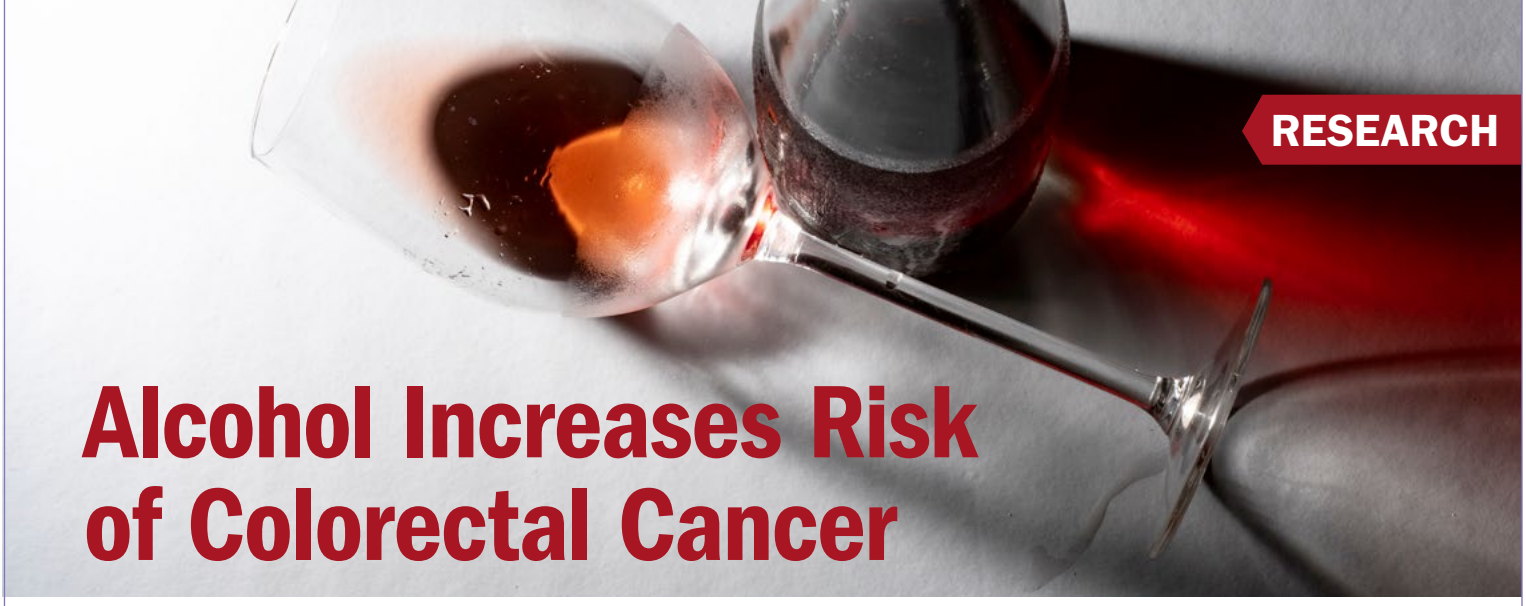

RESEARCH

Alcohol Increases Risk of Colorectal Cancer

Largest-ever study finds alcohol increases colorectal cancer risk across all major tumor subtypes.

New research provides strong evidence that drinking alcohol increases the risk of colorectal cancer, regardless of the tumor's molecular subtype. The study, which was the largest of its kind, reinforces current recommendations to limit or avoid alcohol to help reduce cancer risk.

About the Study

While alcohol has long been linked to colorectal cancer, researchers wanted to know whether it primarily affects one specific biological pathway or increases risk more broadly.

Led by Dr. Christos Chalitsios and Dr. Konstantinos Tsilidis of the University of Ioannina (Greece) and Imperial College London (UK), researchers analyzed data from more than 22,000 people. They examined several major molecular subtypes of colorectal cancer, including those defined by:

- Microsatellite instability (MSI)
- CpG island methylator phenotype (CIMP)
- Mutations in the BRAF and KRAS genes

The study was published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in June 2026.

What Did the Researchers Find?

The researchers found that alcohol was associated with a similar increase in risk across all tumor subtypes. In other words, there was no evidence that alcohol selectively increases the risk of one specific type of colorectal cancer.

The study also found that among people who drink alcohol, risk increases with higher consumption. Each additional 14 grams of alcohol per day, which is about one standard drink, was linked to a 10 percent higher risk of developing colorectal cancer. The increase was most apparent in people drinking more than 28 grams per day, which is roughly two or more drinks.

Genetic analyses further supported the link between higher alcohol intake and increased colorectal cancer risk.

"Alcohol is consistently associated with a range of adverse health outcomes," says Dr. Konstantinos Tsilidis, a lead researcher on the study. "Evidence no longer supports the idea that alcohol is 'good' for health at any level. Although there are still unknowns in alcohol and health research, alcohol should not be recommended for disease prevention, and people who choose to drink are advised to keep consumption as low as possible."

What This Means for You

This study underlines AICR's consistent key message that for cancer prevention, it is best to not drink alcohol.

The findings strengthen the evidence that alcohol increases colorectal cancer risk regardless of tumor subtype. If you do drink, reducing your intake can lower your risk, as there is no completely safe level of alcohol consumption when it comes to cancer.

This research was funded by Wereld Kanker Onderzoek Fonds (WKOF), the Netherlands-based partner of the World Cancer Research Fund International grant program.

YOU CAN ORDER A FREE COPY OF *REDUCE YOUR RISK OF COLON CANCER*. SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 2.

PHOTO BY MENORCAEVO/ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS

Following AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations Lowers Risk of Death After Cancer Diagnosis

A new study published in the journal Cancer found that cancer survivors who more closely followed AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations before their cancer diagnosis were less likely to die from any cause during the study period.

About the Study

The research was led by Professor John Mathers, Professor Linda Sharp, and Dr. Fiona Malcomson at Newcastle University, United Kingdom (Dr. Malcomson is also a scientific advisor to AICR). Researchers used data from the UK Biobank, which included 28,550 participants who were diagnosed with a single cancer. They assessed how closely the AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations were followed at time of recruitment prior to a cancer diagnosis. They used a scoring system that included the following five recommendations:

1. Be a healthy weight
2. Be physically active
3. Eat whole grains, vegetables, fruit and beans
4. Limit red and processed meat
5. Limit alcohol consumption

Points were assigned for fully meeting, partly meeting or not meeting each recommendation. A score from 0-5 points was calculated for each participant. Higher total scores meant greater alignment with the Recommendations, indicating a healthier lifestyle.

What Are the Results?

Meeting one recommendation (scoring one point) was linked with an 8 percent lower risk of all-cause mortality (dying from any cause) during the study period. Participants scoring 3.25-5 points had a 16 percent lower risk. Each 1-point increase in total score was also associated with lower all-cause mortality among people with:

- Liver cancer: 14%
- Esophageal cancer: 11%
- Prostate cancer: 8%
- Breast cancer: 6%
- Lung cancer: 5%

What This Means for You

Follow the AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations because they really work. The take-home message is that the Recommendations apply to cancer survivors too.

This study was funded by Wereld Kanker Onderzoek Fonds (WKOF), the Netherlands-based charity within the World Cancer Research Fund International network of charities.