By Dr. Ramona Warren

Cancer. The mere word can incite fear – especially in those whose lives have been touched by it. These days, most people have been impacted by cancer, whether it be by a personal diagnosis, or the diagnosis of a loved one. My grandmother and aunt both died from cancer and, just over two years ago, my mom was diagnosed with lung cancer. By the time she was diagnosed, the cancer had already metastasized to her liver and spine. We were blessed to have 10 weeks with her before we had to say goodbye for the last time.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2012 there were more than 14 million new cancer cases worldwide, and more than 8.2 million cancer-related deaths. The National Cancer Institute says that “it is estimated that in 2016 there will be 1,685,210 new cases of cancer in the United States and 595,690 people will die from the disease.” The American Institute for Cancer Research expects the number of new cancer cases to be 55 percent higher by the year 2030.

These numbers are astounding, especially when we are told by the American Cancer Society that Americans could cut their death rate from cancer in half by simply making some lifestyle changes. Eating healthier foods, moderately exercising for 30 minutes 5 days a week, making sure you have sufficient amounts of vitamin D, getting quality sleep and stopping smoking are basic lifestyle changes that go a long way to help reduce your risk for cancer.

According to the documentary miniseries, *The Truth About Cancer*, one of the most important steps to cut your risk for cancer is to avoid the top 10 cancer-causing foods listed below.

* 1. **Genetically Modified Foods (GMOs):** More than 90 percent of our corn and soy are now genetically modified. No one – including the growers and manufacturers of GMO foods – knows the long-term effect this will have on human health. Look for GMO-free labels whenever possible or buy organic (which always means a product is not genetically modified).
  2. **Microwave Popcorn:** From the chemically-lined bag to the actual contents, microwave popcorn is at the center of lung cancer debates around the world. Not only are the kernels and oil likely GMO (which the manufacturer does not have to disclose) unless organic, the fumes released from artificial butter flavoring contain diacetyl, which is toxic to humans. Make your own organic popcorn the old-fashioned way – it’s healthier, tastes better, and doesn’t release toxic fumes.
  3. **Canned Goods:** Most cans are lined with bisphenol-A (BPA), which has been shown to genetically alter the brain cells of rats. Stick to fresh or frozen vegetables that have no added ingredients.
  4. **Grilled Red Meat:** While grilled food can taste delicious, scientists have discovered preparing meats in this way – especially processed meats like hot dogs – releases a carcinogen called heterocyclic aromatic amines. When you grill red meat to the point of well done, it changes the chemical and molecular structure of the meat. You’re better off baking, broiling, or preparing meat in a skillet than on the grill.
  5. **Refined Sugar:** The biggest cancer-causing food (by far) is high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and other refined sugars. Brown sugar isn’t any better – it is highly-refined white sugar with some of the removed molasses added back in for flavor and color. Cancers cells love sugar!
  6. **Salted, Pickled, and Smoked Foods:** These products typically contain preservatives, such as nitrates, which are intended to prolong shelf life. The additives used in processed foods can accumulate in your body over time. Eventually, such toxins cause damage at the cellular level and lead to diseases like cancer. (Note: By pickled foods, I am not referring to the fermented foods you make at home.)
  7. **Soda and Carbonated Beverages:** Sodas have been at the center of the health debate for two decades as a major cancer-causing food. Filled with high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), dyes, and a host of other chemicals, they are very bad for every aspect of your health. They provide zero nutritional value and rob your body of the nutrients you get from other foods.
  8. **White Flour:** When flour is refined, all nutritional value is removed. Then it’s bleached with chlorine gas to make it more appealing to consumers. The glycemic index for white flour is very high – meaning it spikes your insulin levels without providing nutritional fuel. Simple sugars (like refined carbohydrates) are the preferred fuel source for cancer.
  9. **Farmed Fish:** Commercial fish farming involves raising an incredible number of fish (such as salmon), in a crowded environment. More than 60 percent of the salmon consumed in the United States comes from farming operations. These farms treat the fish with antibiotics, pesticides, and other carcinogenic chemicals to control the bacterial, viral, and parasitic outbreaks that result from cramming so many fish in a small space.
  10. **Hydrogenated Oils:** [Vegetable oils are chemically extracted](https://thetruthaboutcancer.com/common-cooking-oil-cancer-nightmare/) from their source, chemically treated, and more chemicals are added to change the smell and taste. They’re packed with unhealthy omega-6 fats (that Americans already consume way too much of) and have been proven to alter the structure of our cell membranes.

By avoiding the foods listed above, you can make great strides toward lowering your overall cancer risk. Stay tuned next week for a couple cancer-fighting recipes to add to your weekly repertoire.