

## October: Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States as statistics show that 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. Breast cancer is a disease in which cancer cells develop in the breast. The cancer cells may spread to other parts of the body (1).

The exact cause of breast cancer is unknown. Early detection is important: women should go for regular breast cancer screenings. A healthy lifestyle is also vital in preventing and treating breast cancer. Healthy lifestyle tips include eating well, drinking lots of fluids, daily movement, stress management, adequate sleep, and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Generally, a diet rich in a variety of whole plant foods and limited in refined grains and processed foods is recommended.

There is not a single food that can protect you against cancer. However, studies have shown that a diet rich in inflammation-fighting foods filled with antioxidants and phytochemicals may help lower your risk for many types of cancer.

Here are some foods filled with antioxidants and phytochemicals:



### **Broccoli:**

*Sulforaphane* in broccoli decreases the number of breast cancer cells responsible for cancer spread and recurrence. You can have broccoli raw or cook it to make it softer by briefly steaming or stir-frying (2).



### **Tumeric:**

*Curcuma*, found in turmeric, is anti-inflammatory and helps fight breast cancer cells. Turmeric adds a beautiful yellow color and delicious flavor to many dishes, such as rice dishes, chicken marinades, and soups (3).



### **Berries:**

Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and blackberries are high in anthocyanins, a compound that provides anti-cancer benefits (4).



### **Garlic:**

*Alliums* found in garlic have been shown to slow tumor growth and reduce breast cancer risk. Adding onions and garlic regularly to your recipes, whether cooked or raw, will add benefits and flavor. Sauté it with rice or soup dishes or add it to salad dressings (5).



### **Walnuts:**

New research suggests that walnuts may contribute to a cancer-preventive diet. Some ways to enjoy walnuts are having them raw as a snack, adding crushed walnuts to salads, mixing them with Greek yogurt, or adding them to your labneh dip (6).

**Recipe:**  
**Stir-fry Broccoli with Garlic Tahini Sauce**  
**Servings:** 5  
**Serving size:** 3/4 cup

**This Middle Eastern-flavored broccoli recipe makes a perfect side dish!**

**Ingredients:**

Two heads of broccoli, chopped  
Two tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1/3 cup tahini  
1/3 cup warm water  
1/2 to 1 teaspoon of turmeric  
One lemon, juiced  
Two cloves of garlic  
A dash of salt

**Instructions:**

1. Cut the broccoli florets into chunks, leaving the stems long. Add the broccoli, olive oil, and 2 pinches of salt to pan and toss. Stir-fry on medium heat for 7-10 minutes or until slightly crispy. Keep tossing every 2-3 minutes.
2. Add tahini, warm water, garlic, turmeric, and 1 lemon juice to a bowl and whisk to prepare the sauce. Season with salt to taste. Set it aside.
3. When the broccoli is done cooking, remove it from the pan. Smear half of the tahini sauce onto a plate and top it with the broccoli. Spoon the rest of the tahini sauce on top. Enjoy!

Recipe adapted from: [Roasted Broccoli with Lemon Herb + Garlic Tahini Sauce](#)

**Sources:**

1. American Cancer Society: [What is Breast Cancer?](#)
2. Kaiser, Anna E., et al. "Sulforaphane: A broccoli bioactive phytochemical with cancer preventive potential." *Cancers* 13.19 (2021): 4796.
3. Nagaraju, Ganji Purnachandra, et al. "The impact of curcumin on breast cancer." *Integrative Biology* 4.9 (2012): 996-1007.
4. [Postdiagnostic Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Breast Cancer Survival: Prospective Analyses in the Nurses' Health Studies.](#) *Cancer Research*, vol. 80, no. 22, 2020, pp. 5134-5143.
5. Modem S, Dicarlo SE, Reddy TR. Fresh Garlic Extract Induces Growth Arrest and Morphological Differentiation of MCF7 Breast Cancer Cells. *Genes Cancer*. 2012 Feb;3(2):177-86. doi: 10.1177/1947601912458581. PMID: 23050048; PMCID: PMC3463925.
6. American Institute for Cancer Research: [Walnuts: Support a Cancer-Preventive Diet](#)

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