

# Do You Want to Live Longer?

Dr. Donald Colbert suggests that by eating healthy and losing weight you can reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer, which will lead to a more fruitful life.



Question: I am overweight, and I know that obesity increases the risk of heart disease and cancer. What can I do to fight back? L.R. Nashville, Tennessee

Answer:When we develop bad habits related to our diet by eating the wrong foods, such as sugar (in excess), fast foods, fried foods, highly processed carbohydrates and meats (in excess), we become prone to obesity. You're right, being obese does increase the risk of developing either heart disease or cancer.

This correlation occurs because fat cells promote inflammation. It's an established medical fact that most heart disease and much cancer is actually caused by inflammation. Fat cells also play a beneficial role in the body—they produce substances that assist in regulating the immune system. But an excess of fat will easily outdo any healthful benefit it normally brings to the body. For example, too much fat in the body can:

- trigger excessive inflammation, which eventually will lead to heart disease or cancer
- cause the blood to clot, creating a predisposition to heart attack or stroke
- constrict blood vessels, a reaction that eventually leads to hypertension
- promote cell growth and blood vessel growth, which increases the risk of cancer.
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