

# POLICY FACTSHEET

## Supplements and cancer prevention

The World Cancer Research Fund's Cancer Prevention Recommendations advise not to use supplements for cancer prevention.

This factsheet outlines how this recommendation can be rolled out at a population level. It expands advice in World Cancer Research Fund International's Policy Blueprint for cancer prevention, which combines evidence on cancer risk – our Cancer Prevention Recommendations – with policy advice for population-level prevention.

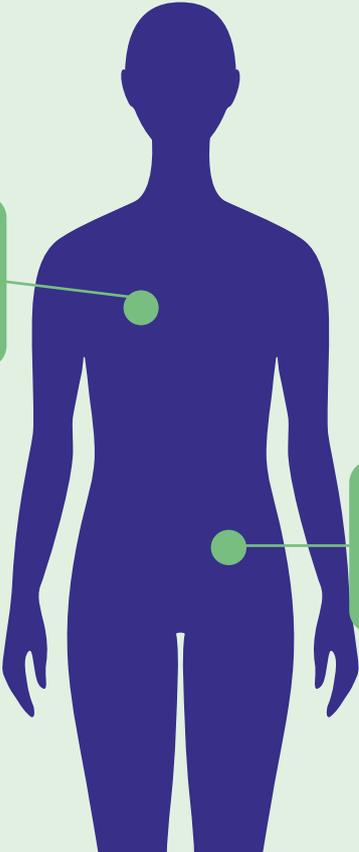


### CANCER PREVENTION RECOMMENDATION:

**Do not use supplements for cancer prevention**

High-dose dietary supplements are not recommended for cancer prevention. Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone

For more details, see: [wcrf.org/evidence-for-our-recommendations/supplements](https://wcrf.org/evidence-for-our-recommendations/supplements)



**Lung\***

**Bowel\*\***

**Supplements and cancer risk**

\*High-dose beta caroten may increase risk in current and former smokers

\*\*Calcium supplements may decrease risk

There is no strong evidence that dietary supplements, apart from calcium supplements for bowel cancer, can reduce cancer risk. Some trials for other cancer sites have shown potential for unexpected adverse effects.

There are 3 key policy areas to support healthy environments regarding dietary supplements:



Marketing restrictions



Effectively inform people



Counselling in healthcare

### Unlocking the co-benefits of cancer prevention policies

Our policy recommendations have co-benefits in relation to prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), meeting sustainability targets, reversing health inequities, addressing commercial determinants of health and fulfilling human rights. World Cancer Research Fund International's Policy Blueprint for cancer prevention includes an assessment of co-benefits and potential trade-offs when policy goals do not align.

[wcrf.org/blueprint-for-cancer-prevention](https://wcrf.org/blueprint-for-cancer-prevention)

## Marketing restrictions



- Ensure that health claims on the labels of dietary supplements are strictly regulated and that any health claims do not include cancer prevention.

## Effectively inform people



- Develop public information campaigns about not using dietary supplements for cancer prevention.

## Counselling in healthcare



- Include guidelines on nutritional supplements in counselling programmes.

An integrated strategy which together addresses the influence of diet, weight, breastfeeding, physical activity and alcohol consumption will have a greater impact on cancer risk and survivorship than individual factors alone. For more information, visit [wcrf.org/blueprint-for-cancer-prevention](https://wcrf.org/blueprint-for-cancer-prevention)



## About us

World Cancer Research Fund International is a leading authority on the links between diet, nutrition, weight and physical activity and cancer. We are an international not-for-profit association that leads and unifies a network of cancer prevention charities, including the American Institute for Cancer Research, World Cancer Research Fund in the UK and Wereld Kanker Onderzoek Fonds in the Netherlands. World Cancer Research Fund International is in official relations with the World Health Organization.

## Acknowledgements

For a full list of acknowledgements please scan the QR code.



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Scan the QR code to find more information on our policy resources and **our policy work**

