

SUPPLEMENTS AND CANCER PREVENTION



**SCIENCE
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CANCER PREVENTION ACTION WEEK
15–21 June 2026 wcrf.org/CPAW2026

WHAT ARE SUPPLEMENTS?

Supplements provide large amounts of nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. People take them alongside their usual diet in forms like tablets, capsules, liquids, powders or gummies.



ARE FORTIFIED FOODS AND SUPPLEMENTS THE SAME?

No. People eat fortified foods as part of their usual diet. Supplements are taken alongside food. Fortified foods have nutrients added, for example plant milks with added calcium.



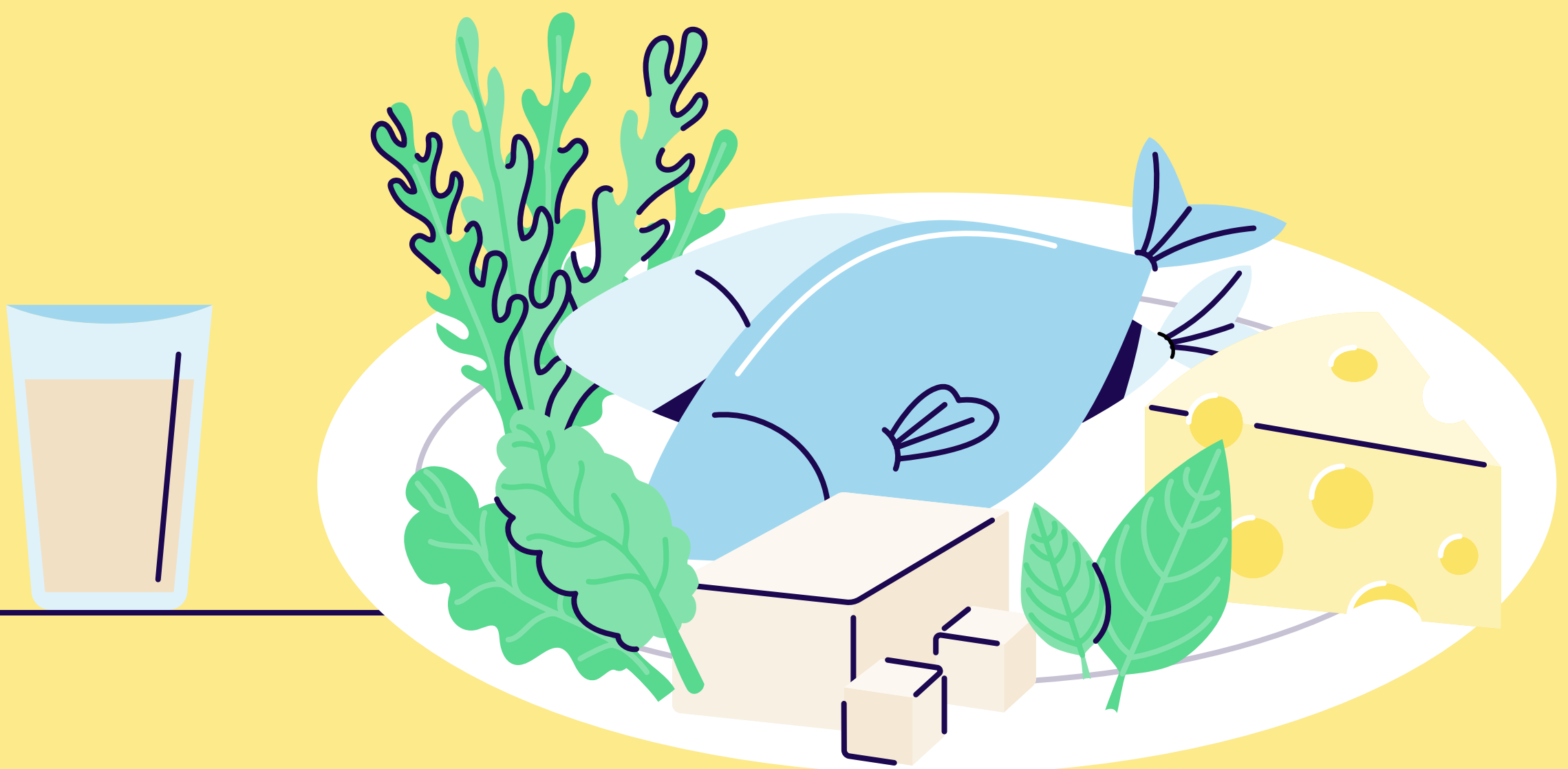
SHOULD I TAKE SUPPLEMENTS TO PREVENT CANCER?

Do not use supplements to prevent cancer. Instead, eat a healthy, balanced diet with plenty of fibre-rich foods like fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and beans. This helps your body get the nutrients it needs, so you do not need to rely on supplements.



DO CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS AFFECT CANCER RISK?

Taking calcium supplements may lower bowel cancer risk. However, it is best to get calcium from food. Good sources include leafy greens, dairy foods, fish with bones and calcium-fortified foods (like plantmilks and tofu).



CAN SUPPLEMENTS CAUSE CANCER?

Some supplements contain very large amounts of nutrients, which can be harmful. For example, high-dose beta-carotene supplements increase lung cancer risk in people who smoke or used to smoke.

These high doses are much greater than what you would get from food. Beta-carotene naturally found in fruit and vegetables (like in carrots) do not increase cancer risk.



Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables can help lower cancer risk.

WHO MAY NEED SUPPLEMENTS FOR GENERAL HEALTH?

- Women who can become pregnant and pregnant women
- People with darker skin or who get little sun exposure
- People following a vegan diet
- Children under 5



Your GP or a Registered Dietitian may recommend supplements such as vitamin D, folic acid or vitamin B12, depending on your needs. Speak to them if you are unsure.

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- Do not take supplements to prevent cancer. Eat a healthy, balanced diet to get the nutrients your body needs.
- Taking high-dose supplements may be harmful to your health.
- Speak to your GP or a Registered Dietitian before taking supplements.

Find the latest advice on diet and cancer prevention at wcrf.org

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