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Cancer Society of New Zealand  
National Office

Te Rōpū Mate  
Pukupuku o Aotearoa

Level 6  
Wakefield House  
90 The Terrace  
PO Box 10847  
Wellington

Telephone: 64 4 494-7270  
Facsimile: 64 4 494-7271

Websites: [www.cancernz.org.nz](http://www.cancernz.org.nz)  
[www.daffodilday.org.nz](http://www.daffodilday.org.nz)  
Email: [admin@cancer.org.nz](mailto:admin@cancer.org.nz)

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## **Reduce your cancer risk with a diet high in vegetables and fruit**

A diet high in vegetables and fruit plays an important part in reducing cancer risk, The Cancer Society of New Zealand said today in response to recent media reports from Australia suggesting vegetable and fruit consumption does not prevent cancer.

Health Promotion Manager, Dr Jan Pearson, said there was abundant scientific evidence that a healthy body weight reduces cancer risk and that eating a diet high in vegetables and fruit, instead of foods high in sugar, fat and salt, was one of the healthiest ways to avoid becoming overweight or obese.

“So it is clear that eating plenty of vegetables and fruit, along with not smoking, minimising or avoiding alcohol and protecting yourself from unsafe levels of ultraviolet radiation, is one of the best things you can do to reduce your cancer risk,” Dr Pearson said.

She said the evidence for a direct cancer-protective effect associated with properties found in vegetables and fruit had long been inconsistent, with some studies showing convincing evidence and others, such as the Victorian study at the centre of recent media reports, showing little evidence to support claims of direct protective effects.

“However, there is ample and unambiguous evidence that consumption of vegetables and fruit instead of unhealthy foods will help people retain a cancer-smart body weight, as well as contribute to the prevention of a number of other illnesses.

“Two of the most prevalent cancers in New Zealand, bowel cancer and breast cancer in post-menopausal women, are clearly linked to healthy body weight and waist circumference, along with a number of other potentially deadly cancers.

“So it is important that people eat the recommended five plus serves of vegetables and fruit each day to help reduce their cancer risk.

“Good nutrition, along with appropriate physical activity, has also been shown to improve treatment and survival outcomes for people living with cancer.”

**Dr Jan Pearson,**  
Health Promotion Manager  
Cancer Society of New Zealand