



EUROPEAN
FEDERATION OF
THE ASSOCIATIONS
OF DIETITIANS

EFAD – the voice of European Dietitians

Press release embargoed until 25.5.17

European Dietitians committed to supporting people with Cancer

EUROPEAN WEEK AGAINST CANCER (25-31 MAY)

highlights the fact that the incidence of cancer is on the increase in Europe. Nutrition can play a role in cancer prevention through the maintenance of ideal body weight and through the optimal balance of diet during childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Individuals that are overweight or obese have an increased risk of some cancers including colorectal, endometrial and post-menopausal breast cancer. This is well known among scientists and health professionals but perhaps less so amongst the general public.

A recent report by the American Institute for Cancer Research stated that

“There are no guarantees when it comes to cancer, but there is clear evidence that individuals can take steps to lower risk.”

What is needed now is the awareness of politicians in Europe, the media and the general public that poor diet can contribute to the development of some cancers. A diet that is high in whole grains, pulses, vegetables and fruits and limits intake of alcohol, red meat, processed meat, salt and alcohol is associated with a lower risk of cancer.

Once cancer has been diagnosed it is essential that Individuals receive competent support from dietitians – who are health professionals trained in nutrition. At the time of diagnosis some people may have lost weight, body muscle and be at risk of malnutrition. This makes cancer treatment more difficult to tolerate and may ultimately limit the amount of cancer treatment they are able to receive. Others may experience weight gain with the use of hormone treatments which can adversely affect prognosis.

Dietitians are key members of the multi-professional team treating those with cancer. They are able to assess and provide nutritional support for people undergoing all treatment modalities including surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, hormone and novel therapies. Ultimately this support can influence the tolerance to treatment, nutritional status and quality of life. Many myths about diet and cancer are promoted via the internet and media. The Dietitian is able to support people to make decisions about nutrition based on research evidence rather than popular myths.

Increasing the role of good nutrition after cancer treatment is being recognised. Lifestyle choices relating to diet, exercise and ideal body weight are recognised to impact on the long term health of those following cancer treatments. For people who continue with palliative treatment and support, food and nutrition can form a key part of their overall quality of life.

The geographical range and specialist expertise of EFAD members gives its dietitians’ a unique insight and perspective for improved health solutions for those with cancer. They remain a key contributor to the health debate, and driving positive and sustainable outcomes for the future of European citizens and beyond.

EFAD strongly supports the initiative of Europe Against Cancer and calls upon the European Parliament to take the role of nutrition and cancer seriously.

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ABOUT EFAD

EFAD is the voice of 35.000 European dietitians - more than half the profession – and is the only organisation advocating for dietitians in Europe.

EFAD alerts MEPs, the European Commission, WHO European Region and others about how dietitians, as key nutrition professionals in Europe, are contributing to a healthier Europe.

The aims of EFAD are to:

- Promote the development of the dietetic profession
- Develop dietetics on a scientific and professional level in the common interest of the member associations
- Facilitate communication between national dietetic associations and other organisations – professional, educational, and governmental
- Encourage a better nutrition situation for the population of the member countries of Europe.

Membership of the Federation is open all National Associations of Dietitians from member states of Europe. EFAD currently has 34 member associations, representing over 35,000 dietitians in 27 European countries.

You can find out more from the EFAD web site www.efad.org

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