



Center for Integrative Oncology and Survivorship

Preventing Weight Loss During Cancer Treatment

Nutrition Goals During Cancer Treatment

1. Maintain current weight and preserve muscle mass.
2. Eat sufficient protein.

Your protein needs are: _____

3. Stay hydrated.

Your fluid needs are: _____

4. Maintain a regular, well-balanced diet, if tolerable.

Sometimes, treatment-related side effects can make it challenging to meet all of your nutrition needs.

Dealing with Side Effects

The following lists below contain suggestions for coping with side effects, along with foods that may ease the symptom.

Nausea

- Eat bland, dry, starchy foods
- Eat small, frequent meals
- Incorporate ginger into your diet to help ease nausea
- Choose foods without a strong odor
- Avoid eating your favorite foods when feeling ill
- Avoid fatty foods
- Suggested foods: Saltine crackers, applesauce, bananas, mashed potatoes, toast, dry cereal, oatmeal, yogurt, 100 percent juice, popsicles, ginger tea, broth

Vomiting

- Wait 10 to 15 minutes after the last vomiting episode, then start with one tablespoon of fluid at a time
- Suggested foods: first—sports drink, water, juice; after 3 to 4 hours—bland solids

Constipation

- Increase fluids
- Increase fiber
- Add light physical activity
- Try a fiber supplement such as Metamucil
- Try a probiotic
- Suggested foods: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, water, hot tea

Diarrhea

- Eat bland, low-fiber foods
- Try a probiotic
- Try a soluble fiber supplement such as Benefiber
- Avoid very hot and very cold foods
- Avoid lactose and high-fat foods
- Suggested foods: canned fruits, canned vegetables, applesauce, rice, potatoes, chicken, avocado, Saltine crackers, white bread, yogurt

Taste Changes

- Add lemon juice or salt to foods that taste too sweet
- Eat with plastic utensils and cook in glassware
- Add strong seasonings to foods if taste buds are diminished
- Mix ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon baking soda with 1 liter of water and cleanse your mouth with a little before eating
- Use a spoonful of peanut butter to cleanse the palate before eating

Dry or Sore Mouth

- Increase fluids
- Eat softer foods
- Use gravies or sauces to make foods moist
- Suggested foods: chicken, egg or tuna salad; smoothies or milkshakes; meatloaf; mashed potatoes; beans

Fatigue or Poor Appetite

- Eat your biggest meal at the time of day when you have the best appetite and the most energy
- Create a schedule of meals and snacks
- Suggested foods: healthy frozen meals, canned and frozen foods, protein shakes and bars