

Nutrition Recommendations During and After Cancer Treatment

Outlined below are some tips to promote optimal health and weight during and after treatment. This plant-based diet may be modified to manage nutrition-related side effects, reduce symptoms and manage weight. Please speak with a dietitian if you are experiencing treatment side effects or sudden, unexplained weight changes.

Follow a Plant-Based Diet

Vegetables and Fruits

- Fill at least two-thirds of your plate with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans. Some examples:
 - Fruit on whole grain breakfast cereal
 - Meal-sized green salad topped with a variety of fresh vegetables
 - Vegetable sticks or a piece of fruit for an afternoon snack
 - Whole grain pasta topped with tomato and mushroom sauce
- Eat a wide variety of whole fruits and vegetables, choosing from all colors of the rainbow.
- If you enjoy canned fruit, purchase fruit canned in its own juice, not in syrup.

Other Plant Foods

- Eat legumes such as beans, peas, lentils and soy beans regularly. Use them in place of meat in soups and casseroles or on top of salads.
- Make at least half of your grains whole grains. Sources of whole grains include: whole wheat bread, corn or whole wheat tortillas, bran cereals, brown rice, wild rice, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal, barley, amaranth, millet, buckwheat and quinoa.
- Choose raw or dry roasted nuts and seeds, limiting portions to the size of a golf ball. Use nuts as a condiment and sprinkle them on cereal, salads or roasted vegetables.

Eat Lean Protein

- Limit animal foods to no more than one third of your plate.
- Choose fish, chicken, turkey, beans and lentils most often.
- Eat no more than 18 ounces of red meat (beef, pork or lamb) per week.
- Prepare meat, fish and poultry by baking, broiling or poaching; avoid frying and charbroiling.
- Avoid processed meats such as hot dogs, sandwich meats, salami, sausage and bacon.

Minimize High-Calorie, High-Salt, Low-Nutrient Foods

- Limit chips, microwave popcorn and “fast food.”
- Limit processed foods typically high in salt such as frozen meals, soup and pizza.
- Avoid foods high in sugar and artificial ingredients such as sodas, fruit flavored drinks, sport drinks, energy drinks, juice, flavored milk, candy and processed desserts.
- Eat only small amounts of sweeteners, such as sugar and honey.
- When eating something sweet, choose a dessert prepared at home from known ingredients such as a yogurt parfait, pudding or icing-free cake. Keep portions small.
- To improve the nutritional value of homemade treats: prepare cakes with whole-grain flour, reduce the sugar by half, and replace half the oil with applesauce or low-fat yogurt.

Limit Alcohol

- The American Institute for Cancer Research currently recommends not drinking alcohol.
- Ask your doctor and/or pharmacist if alcohol will interfere with treatment or medicines.
- If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women (one drink is equal to 12 ounces beer, 5 ounces wine or 1½ ounces liquor).

Other Tips

Choose Fats Wisely

- Choose foods rich in unsaturated and omega-3 fats including: olive oil, canola oil, olives, walnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, flax seed and avocado.
- Eat two to three servings a week of cold water, wild-caught fish such as salmon, herring, sardines, trout, mackerel, halibut and tuna to ensure adequate intake of omega-3 fats.
- Limit saturated and omega-6 fats found in red meats and fried foods. Limit high-fat dairy foods, choosing instead low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese and ice cream.

Drink Plenty of Fluids

- Drink approximately 8-12 cups of fluid per day; chose water most often.
- Age, weight and physical activity, as well as some forms of cancer treatment and side effects, will affect individual fluid needs. Your health care team may adjust your fluid level as needed.

For More Information

If you have questions about your nutrition needs, ask your health care provider to schedule an appointment for you with the dietitian.