

Cancer -- dietary needs

Not everyone has eating problems during cancer treatment; it is not a given. There is no way to know in advance whether you will have eating problems and, if so, how bad they will be. You may have just a few problems or none at all. In part, this depends on the type of cancer you have, where it is in your body, what kind of treatment you have, how long treatment lasts, and the doses of treatment you receive.

People with cancer often need to follow diets that are different from what they think of as healthy. For most people, a healthy diet includes:

- Lots of fruits and vegetables, and whole grain breads, Rice and cereals
- Modest amounts of meat and milk products
- Small amounts of fat, sugar, alcohol, and salt

When you have cancer, though, you need to eat to keep up your strength to deal with the side effects of treatment. When you are healthy, eating enough food is often not a problem. But when you are dealing with cancer and treatment, this can be a real challenge.

When you have cancer, you may need extra protein and calories. At times, your diet may need to include extra milk, cheese, and eggs. If you have trouble chewing and swallowing, you may need to add sauces and gravies. Sometimes, you may need to eat low-fiber foods instead of those with high fiber.

Cancer treatment can cause side effects that lead to eating problems

Cancer treatments are designed to kill cancer cells. But these treatments can also damage healthy cells. Damage to healthy cells can cause side effects. Some of these side effects can lead to eating problems.

Common eating problems during cancer treatment include:

- Appetite loss
- Changes in sense of taste or smell
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Dry mouth
- Lactose intolerance
- Nausea
- Sore mouth
- Sore throat and trouble swallowing
- Vomiting
- Weight gain
- Weight loss

Some people have appetite loss or nausea because they are stressed about cancer and treatment. People who react this way almost always feel better once treatment starts and they know what to expect.

Things to do and think about before you start cancer treatment

- Until treatment starts you will not know what, if any, side effects or eating problems you may have. If you do have problems, they may be mild. Many side effects can be controlled. Many problems go away when cancer treatment ends.
- Think of your cancer treatment as a time to get well and focus just on yourself.
- Eat a healthy diet before treatment starts. This helps you stay strong during treatment and lowers your risk of infection.
- Go to the dentist. It is important to have a healthy mouth before you start cancer treatment.
- Learn about your cancer and its treatment. Many people feel better when they know what to expect.

Ways you can get ready to eat well

- Fill the refrigerator, cupboard, and freezer with healthy foods. Make sure to include items you can eat even when you feel sick.
- Stock up on foods that need little or no cooking or pre-cooked foods.
- Eat fresh cooked meals and chose a manageable portion size.
- Avoid eating alone.
- A meal can be liquid or semi solid type.

During treatment, there are many helpful medicines and other ways to manage eating problems. Once treatment ends, many eating problems go away.

If you are already on a special diet for diabetes, kidney or heart disease, or other health problem, it is even more important to plan your diet to cope with the eating problems.

Ways to get the most from foods and drinks

During treatment, you may have good days and bad days when it comes to food. Here are some ways to manage:

- Eat plenty of protein and calories when you can. This helps you keep up your strength and helps rebuild tissues harmed by cancer treatment.
- Eat when you have the biggest appetite. For many people, this is in the morning. You might want to eat a bigger meal early in the day and drink liquid meal replacements later on.
- Eat those foods that you can, even if it is only one or two items. Stick with these foods until you are able to eat more. You might also drink liquid meal replacements for extra calories and protein.
- Do not worry if you cannot eat at all some days. Spend this time finding other ways to feel better, and start eating when you can. Do not starve your self thinking that it will help; it will not help you but will certainly harm you.
- Drink plenty of liquids. It is even more important to get plenty to drink on days when you cannot eat. Drinking a lot of fluids

helps your body stay hydrated. Adults should drink 4-5 liters of water a day. You may find this easier to do if you keep a water bottle nearby.

Taking special care with food to avoid infections

Some cancer treatments can make you more likely to get infections. When this happens, you need to take special care in the way you handle and prepare food.

- Avoid microwave for cooking or warming the food.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Scrub all raw fruits and vegetables before you eat them. Do not eat foods (like raspberries) that cannot be washed well. You should scrub fruits and vegetables that have rough surfaces, such as melons, before you cut them.
- Wash your hands, knives, and counter tops before and after you prepare food. This is most important when preparing raw meat, chicken, turkey, and fish.
- Use one cutting board for meat and one for fruits and vegetables.
- Thaw meat, chicken, turkey, and fish taken from the refrigerator; do not leave them sitting out for a long time.
- Cook meat, chicken, turkey, and eggs thoroughly. Meats should not have any pink inside. Eggs should be hard, not runny.
- Do not eat raw fish or shellfish, such as sushi and uncooked oysters.
- Make sure that all of your juices, milk products, and honey are pasteurized.
- Do not use foods or drinks that are past their freshness date.
- Do not eat at buffets, salad bars, or self-service restaurants.
- Do not eat foods that show signs of mold. This includes moldy cheeses such as bleu cheese and Roquefort.

A special note for caregivers

A patient undergoing treatment will have large mood swings even on a single day. Develop a tolerant attitude.

- *Do not be surprised or upset if your loved one's tastes change from day to day.* There may be days when he or she does not want a favorite food or says it tastes bad now.
- *Keep food within easy reach.* This way, your loved one can have a snack when he or she is ready to eat.
- *Offer gentle support.* This is much more helpful than pushing your loved one to eat. Suggest that he or she drinks plenty of clear and full liquids when he or she has no appetite.
- *Talk with your loved one about ways to manage eating problems.* Doing this together can help you both feel more in control.

During cancer treatment, you may feel:

- Depressed
- Anxious
- Afraid
- Angry
- Helpless
- Alone

It is normal to have these feelings. Although these are not eating problems themselves, strong feelings like these can affect your interest in food, shopping for food, and cooking. Fatigue can also make it harder to cope.

Coping with your feelings during cancer treatment

There are many things you can do to cope with your feelings during treatment so they do not ruin your appetite.

- *Eat your favorite foods on days you do not have treatment.* This way, you can enjoy the foods.

- *Relax, meditate, or pray or involve your self with social and other activities.* Activities like these help many people feel calm and less stressed.
- *Talk with someone you trust about your feelings.* You may want to talk with a close friend, family member, religious or spiritual leader, social worker, counselor, or psychologist. You may also find it helpful to talk with someone who has gone through cancer treatment.
- *Learn about eating problems and other side effects before treatment starts.* Many people feel more in control when they know what to expect and how to manage problems that may occur.
- *Get enough rest.* Make sure you get at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night preferably without using any habit forming drugs.
- *Do not push yourself to do too much or more than you can manage.* Look for easier ways to do your daily tasks.
- *Be active each day.* Studies show that many people feel better when they take short walks or do light exercise each day. Being active like this can also help improve your appetite.

Eating problems and ways to manage them

Here a list of eating problems that cancer treatment may cause. Not everyone gets every eating problem. Some people do not have any problems. Which ones you might have will depend on the type and doses of treatment you receive and whether you have other health problems, such as diabetes or kidney or heart disease.

Appetite Loss

Appetite loss is when you do not want to eat or do not feel like eating very much. It is a common problem that occurs with cancer and its treatment. You may have appetite loss for just 1 or 2 days, or throughout your course of treatment.

No one knows just what causes appetite loss. Reasons may include:

- The cancer itself
- Fatigue
- Pain
- Feelings such as stress, fear, depression, and anxiety
- Cancer treatment side effects such as nausea, vomiting, or changes in how foods taste or smell

Ways to manage with food

- *When it is hard to eat, drink a liquid or powdered meal replacement..*
- *Eat 5 or 6 small meals each day instead of 3 large meals.* You may find it helps to eat smaller amounts at one time. This can also keep you from feeling too full.
- *Keep snacks nearby for when you feel like eating.* Take easy-to-carry snacks such as peanut butter crackers, nuts, granola bars, or dried fruit when you go out. Avoid deep fries, junk foods and sweetmeats.
- *Add extra protein and calories to your diet. Reduce complex carbohydrate and avoid simple carbohydrates.*
- *Drink liquids throughout the day—even when you do not want to eat.* Choose liquids that add calories and other nutrients. These include juice, soup, and milk and soya-based drinks with protein. Avoid carbonated softdrinks like Coke etc.
- *Eat a bedtime snack.* This will give extra calories but will not affect your appetite for the next meal.
- *Eat soft, cool, or frozen foods* like yogurt, puddings, milkshakes etc.
- *Eat larger meals when you feel well and are rested.* For many people, this is in the morning after a good night's sleep.
- *Sip only small amounts of liquids during meals.* Many people feel too full if they eat and drink at the same time. If you want more than just small sips, have a larger drink at least 30 minutes before or after meals.

Other ways to manage

- *Try to have relaxed and pleasant meals.* This includes being with people you enjoy as well as having foods that look good to eat.
- *Exercise.* Being active can help improve your appetite. Studies show that many people with cancer feel better when they get some exercise each day.

Changes in Sense of Taste or Smell

Food may have less taste or certain foods (like meat) may be bitter or taste like metal. Your sense of smell may also change. Sometimes, foods that used to smell good to you no longer do.

Cancer treatment, dental problems, or the cancer itself can cause changes in your sense of taste or smell. Although there is no way to prevent these problems, they often get much better after treatment ends.

Ways to manage with food

- *Choose foods that look and smell good.* Avoid foods that do not appeal to you. For instance, if red meat (such as beef) tastes or smells strange, then try chicken or turkey.
- *Marinate foods.* You can improve the flavor of meat, chicken, or fish by soaking it in a marinade. You can buy marinades in the grocery store or try fruit juices, wine, or salad dressing. While soaking food in a marinade, keep it in the refrigerator until you are ready to cook it.
- *Try tart foods and drinks.* These include oranges and lemonade. Tart lemon custard might taste good and add extra protein and calories. But do not eat tart foods if you have a sore mouth or sore throat.
- *Avoid foods and drinks with smells that bother you.*

Here are some ways to help reduce food smells:

- Serve foods at room temperature
- Keep foods covered

- Use cups with lids (such as travel mugs)
- Drink through a straw
- Use a kitchen fan when cooking
- Cook outdoors
- When cooking, lift lids away from you

Other ways to manage

- If you have a metal taste in your mouth, eating with plastic forks and spoons can help. If you enjoy eating with chopsticks, those might help, too. Also, try cooking foods in glass pots and pans instead of metal ones.
- Keeping your mouth clean by brushing and flossing can help food taste better.

Constipation

Constipation occurs when bowel movements become less frequent and stools become hard, dry, and difficult to pass. You may have painful bowel movements, feel bloated, or have nausea. You may belch, pass a lot of gas, and have stomach cramps or pressure in the rectum.

Chemotherapy, the location of the cancer, pain medication, and other medicines can cause constipation. It can also happen when you do not drink enough liquids or do not eat enough fiber. Some people get constipation when they are not active.

Ways to manage with food

- Drink at least 4 – 5 ltrs of liquids each day.
- Many people find that drinking warm or hot liquids (such as coffee, tea, and soup) can help relieve constipation. You might also try drinking hot liquids right after meals.
- Eat high-fiber foods. These include whole grain breads and cereals, dried fruits, and cooked dried beans or peas. People

with certain types of cancer should not eat a lot of fiber, so check with your doctor before adding fiber to your diet.

Talk with your doctor before taking laxatives, stool softeners, or any medicine to relieve constipation.

Other ways to manage

- Being active can help prevent and relieve constipation. Talk with your doctor about how active you should be and what kind of exercise to do.
- Let your doctor know if you have not had a bowel movement in 2 days. Your doctor may suggest a fiber supplement, laxative, stool softener, or enema. Do not use any of these without first asking your doctor or nurse.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea occurs when you have frequent bowel movements that may be soft, loose, or watery. Foods and liquids pass through the bowel so quickly that your body cannot absorb enough nutrition, vitamins, minerals, and water from them. This can cause dehydration (which occurs when your body has too little water). Diarrhea can be mild or severe and last a short or long time.

Diarrhea can be caused by cancer treatments such as radiation therapy to the abdomen or pelvis, chemotherapy, or biological therapy. These treatments cause diarrhea because they can harm healthy cells in the lining of your large and small bowel. Diarrhea can also be caused by infections, medicine used to treat constipation, or antibiotics.

Ways to manage with food

- Drink plenty of fluids to replace those you lose from diarrhea. Plain water with add salts is best. Do not use so called special drinks, sports drinks and carbonated drinks,

- Eat foods and liquids that are high in sodium magnesium, chlorides and potassium. When you have diarrhea, your body loses these substances, and it is important to replace them. Liquids with sodium include vegetable broth. Foods high in potassium include bananas, apricots, and baked, boiled, or mashed potatoes.
- Eat low-fiber foods. Foods high in fiber can make diarrhea worse. Low-fiber foods include plain or vanilla yogurt, white toast, and white rice.
- Avoid foods or drinks that can make diarrhea worse. These include:
 - Foods high in fiber, such as whole wheat breads.
 - Drinks that have a lot of sugar, such as regular soda and fruit punch
 - Very hot or very cold drinks
 - Greasy, fatty, or fried foods, such as French fries and hamburgers
 - Foods and drinks that can cause gas. These include cooked dried beans and raw fruits and vegetables.
 - Milk and its products.
 - Beer, wine, and other types of alcohol.
 - Spicy foods, such as pepper, hot sauce, salsa, and chili
 - Foods or drinks with caffeine. These include regular coffee, tea, some sodas, and chocolate.
 - Sugar-free products that are sweetened with xylitol or sorbitol. These are found mostly in sugar-free gums and candy. Read product labels to find out if they have these sweeteners in them.
 - Apple juice, since it is high in sorbitol
- Drink only clear liquids for 12 to 14 hours after a sudden attack of diarrhea. This lets your bowels rest and helps replace lost fluids. Let your doctor know if you have sudden diarrhea.

Ask your doctor before taking medicine for diarrhea.

Dry Mouth

Dry mouth occurs when you have less saliva than you used to. This can make it harder to talk, chew, and swallow food. Dry mouth can also change the way food tastes.

Chemotherapy and radiation therapy to the head or neck area can damage the glands that make saliva. Biological therapy and some medicines can also cause dry mouth.

Ways to manage with food

- Sip water throughout the day. This can help moisten your mouth, which can help you swallow and talk. Many people carry water bottles with them.
- Have very sweet or tart foods and drinks (such as lemonade). These help you make more saliva. But do not eat or drink anything sweet or tart if you have a sore mouth or sore throat. It might make these problems worse.
- Eat foods that are easy to swallow. Try pureed cooked foods or soups.
- Moisten food with sauce, gravy, or salad dressing. This helps make food easy to swallow.
- Do not drink beer, wine, or any type of alcohol. These can make your mouth even drier.
- Avoid foods that can hurt your mouth. This includes foods that are very spicy, sour, salty, hard, or crunchy.

Other ways to manage

- Keep your lips moist with lip balm.
- Rinse your mouth every 1 to 2 hours. Mix 1/4 teaspoon baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon salt with 1 cup warm water. Rinse with plain water after using this mixture.
- Do not use mouthwash that has alcohol. Alcohol makes a dry mouth worse.

- Do not use tobacco products, and avoid second-hand smoke. Tobacco products and smoke can hurt your mouth and throat.

Lactose Intolerance

Lactose intolerance occurs when your body cannot digest or absorb a milk sugar called lactose. Lactose is in milk products such as cheese, ice cream, and pudding. Symptoms of lactose intolerance can be mild or severe and may include gas, cramps, and diarrhea. These symptoms may last for weeks or even months after treatment end. Sometimes, lactose intolerance is a life-long problem.

Lactose intolerance can be caused by radiation therapy to the abdomen or pelvis or other treatments that affect the digestive system, such as surgery or antibiotics.

Nausea

Nausea occurs when you feel queasy or sick to your stomach. It may be followed by vomiting (throwing up), but not always. Nausea can keep you from getting the food and nutrients you need. Not everyone gets nausea and those who do may get it right after a treatment or up to 3 days later. Nausea almost always goes away once treatment ends.

Nausea can be a side effect of surgery, chemotherapy, biological therapy, and radiation therapy to the abdomen, small intestine, colon, or brain. It can also be caused by certain types of cancer or other illnesses.

Ways to manage with food

- Eat foods that are easy on your stomach. These include white toast, plain or vanilla yogurt, and clear broth. Try lemon, lime, or other tart-flavored foods.

- Do not skip meals and snacks. Even if you do not feel hungry, you should still eat. For many people, having an empty stomach makes nausea worse.
- Choose foods that appeal to you. Do not force yourself to eat any food that makes you feel sick. At the same time, do not eat your favorite foods, so you do not link them to feeling sick.
- Sip only small amounts of liquids during meals. Many people feel full or bloated if they eat and drink at the same time.
- Have liquids throughout the day. Drink slowly. Sip liquids through a straw. Or, drink from a water bottle.
- Have foods and drinks that are not too hot and not too cold.
- Eat dry toast or crackers before getting out of bed if you have nausea in the morning.
- Plan when it is best for you to eat and drink. Some people feel better when they eat a light meal or snack before treatment. Others feel better when they have treatment on an empty stomach (nothing to eat or drink for 2 to 3 hours before).

Be sure to tell your doctor if your anti-nausea medicine does not help.

Other ways to manage

- Relax before each cancer treatment. You may feel better if you try deep breathing, meditation, or prayer. Many people relax with quiet activities such as reading or listening to music.
- Rest after meals. But do so sitting up, not lying down.
- Wear clothes that are comfortable and loose.
- Keep a record of when you feel nausea and why.
- Avoid strong food and drink smells. These include foods that are being cooked, coffee, fish, onions, and garlic. Ask a friend or family member to cook for you to help avoid cooking smells.
- Open a window or turn on a fan if your living area feels stuffy. Fresh air can help relieve nausea. Be sure not to eat in rooms that are too warm or stuffy.

Sore Mouth

Radiation therapy to the head or neck, chemotherapy, and biological therapy can cause mouth sores (little cuts or ulcers in your mouth) and tender gums. Dental problems or mouth infections, such as thrush, can also make your mouth sore.

Cancer treatments can harm the fast-growing cells in the lining of your mouth and lips. Your mouth and gums will most likely feel better once cancer treatment ends.

Ways to manage with food

- Choose foods that are easy to chew. Certain foods can hurt a sore mouth and make it harder to chew and swallow.
- Cook foods until they are soft and tender.
- Cut food into small pieces. You can also puree foods using a blender or food processor.
- Drink with a straw. This can help push the drinks beyond the painful parts of your mouth.
- Eat cold or room-temperature food. Your mouth may hurt more if food is too hot.
- Suck on ice cube. Ice may help numb and soothe your mouth.
- Avoid certain foods and drinks when your mouth is sore.

These include:

- Spicy foods, such as hot sauces, curry dishes, salsa, and chili peppers
- Salty foods
- Drinks that contain alcohol

If you have a sore mouth, do not use tobacco products or drink alcohol.

Other ways to manage

- Rinse your mouth 3 to 4 times a day. Mix 1/4 teaspoon baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon salt with 1 cup warm water. Rinse with plain water after using this mixture.
- Check each day for any sores, white patches, or puffy and red areas in your mouth. This way, you can see or feel problems as soon as they start. Tell your doctor if you notice these changes.
- Do not use items that can hurt or burn your mouth, such as:
 - Mouthwash with any alcohol in it
 - Toothpicks or other sharp objects
 - Cigarettes, cigars, or other tobacco products
 - Beer, wine, liquor, or other type of alcohol
- Tell your doctor and dentist if your mouth or gums are sore. They can figure out whether these are from treatment or dental problems. Ask the dentist about special products to clean and soothe sore teeth and gums.
- Ask your doctor about medicine for pain. He or she may suggest lozenges or sprays that numb your mouth while eating.

Sore Throat and Trouble Swallowing

Chemotherapy and radiation therapy to the head and neck can make the lining of your throat inflamed and sore (esophagitis). It may feel as if you have a lump in your throat or that your chest or throat is burning. You may also have trouble swallowing. These problems may make it hard to eat and cause weight loss.

Some types of chemotherapy and radiation to the head and neck can harm fast-growing cells, such as those in the lining of your throat. Your risk for a sore throat, trouble swallowing, or other throat problems depends on:

- How much radiation you are getting
- If you are getting chemotherapy and radiation therapy at the same time
- Whether you use tobacco or drink alcohol during your course of cancer treatment

Ways to manage with food

- Eat 5 or 6 small meals each day instead of 3 large meals. You may find it easier to eat a smaller amount of food at one time.
- Choose foods that are easy to swallow. Some foods are hard to chew and swallow. To help, choose soft foods.
- Choose foods and drinks that are high in protein and calories.
- Cook foods until they are soft and tender.
- Cut food into small pieces. You can also puree foods using a blender or food processor.
- Moisten and soften foods with gravy, sauces, broth, or yogurt.
- Sip drinks through a straw. This may make them easier to swallow.
- Do not eat or drink things that can burn or scrape your throat, such as:
 - Hot foods and drinks
 - Spicy foods
 - Foods and juices that are high in acid, such as oranges, and lemonade
 - Sharp, crunchy foods.
 - Drinks that contain alcohol.

Tell your doctor if you:

- Have trouble swallowing
- Feel as if you are choking
- Cough while eating or drinking

Other ways to manage

- Sit upright and bend your head slightly forward when eating or drinking. Stay sitting or standing upright for at least 30 minutes after eating.
- Do not use tobacco products. These include cigarettes, pipes, cigars, and chewing tobacco. All of these can make your throat problems worse.

- Think about tube feedings. Sometimes, you may not be able to eat enough to stay strong and a feeding tube may be a good option.

Vomiting

What it is

Vomiting is another way to say ‘throwing up.’ Vomiting may follow nausea and be caused by cancer treatment, food odors, motion, an upset stomach, or bowel gas. Some people vomit when they are in places (such as hospitals) that remind them of cancer. Vomiting, like nausea, can happen right after treatment or 1 or 2 days later. You may also have dry heaves, which occur when your body tries to vomit even though your stomach is empty.

Biological therapy, some types of chemotherapy, and radiation therapy to the abdomen, small intestine, colon, or brain can cause nausea, vomiting, or both. Often, this happens because these treatments harm healthy cells in your digestive track.

Ways to manage with food

- Do not have anything to eat or drink until your vomiting stops.
- Once the vomiting stops drink small amounts of clear liquids (such as water). Be sure to start slowly and take little sips at a time.
- Once you can drink clear liquids without vomiting, try full-liquid foods and drinks or those that are easy on your stomach. You can slowly add back solid foods when you start feeling better.
- Eat 5 or 6 small meals each day instead of 3 large meals. Once you start eating, it may be easier to eat smaller amounts at a time. Do not eat your favorite foods at first, so that you do not begin to dislike them.

Be sure to tell your doctor if your anti-nausea medicine is not helping.

Other ways to manage

- Ask your doctor to prescribe medicine to prevent or control vomiting (antiemetics or antinausea medicines). Be sure to tell your doctor if the medicine is not helping. You may need to take these medicines 1 hour before each treatment and for a few days after. The type of cancer treatment you get and how you react to it affects how long you need to take these medicines.
- Prevent nausea. One way to prevent vomiting is to prevent nausea.
- Call your doctor if your vomiting is severe or lasts for more than 1 or 2 days. Vomiting can lead to dehydration (which occurs when your body does not have enough water). Your doctor needs to know if you cannot keep liquids down.

Weight Gain

Weight gain occurs when you have an increase in body weight. Many people with cancer think they will lose weight and are surprised, and sometimes upset, when they gain weight.

Weight gain can happen for many reasons:

- People with certain types of cancer are more likely to gain weight.
- Hormone therapy, certain types of chemotherapy, and medicines such as steroids can cause weight gain. These treatments can also cause your body to retain water, which makes you feel puffy and gain weight.
- Some treatments can also increase your appetite so you feel hungry and eat more. You gain weight when you eat more calories than your body needs.
- Cancer and its treatments can cause fatigue and changes in your schedule that may lead to a decrease in activity. Being less active can cause weight gain.

Do not go on a diet to lose weight before talking with your doctor about it.

Ways to manage with food

- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. These are high in fiber and low in calories. They can help you feel full without adding a lot of calories.
- Eat foods that are high in fiber, such as whole grain breads, cereals, etc. People with certain types of cancer should not eat a lot of fiber, so check with your doctor before adding fiber to your diet.
- Choose lean meats, such as lean beef, pork trimmed of fat, or poultry without skin. These include low-fat or non-fat yogurt and skim or 1% milk.
- Eat less fat. Eat only small amounts of butter, mayonnaise, desserts, fried foods, and other high-calorie foods.
- Cook with low-fat methods, such as broiling, steaming.
- Eat small portion sizes. When you eat out, take half of your meal home to eat later.
- Eat less salt. This helps you not retain water if your weight gain is from fluid retention.

Other ways to manage

- Exercise each day. Not only does exercise help you burn calories, but studies show that it helps people with cancer feel better. Talk with your doctor about how much exercise to do while having cancer treatment.
- Talk with your doctor before going on a diet to lose weight. He or she can help figure out why you are gaining weight and prescribe medicine (called a diuretic) if you have fluid retention.

Weight Loss

Weight loss is when you have a decrease in body weight.

Weight loss can be caused by cancer itself, or by side effects of cancer treatment, such as nausea and vomiting. Stress and worry can also cause weight loss. Many people with cancer have weight loss during treatment.

Ways to manage with food

- Eat when it is time to eat, rather than waiting until you feel hungry. You still need to eat even if you do not feel hungry while being treated for cancer.
- Eat foods that are high in protein and calories. You can also add protein and calories to other foods.
- Drink milkshakes, smoothies, juices, or soups if you do not feel like eating solid foods. These can provide the protein, vitamins, and calories your body needs.

Other ways to manage

- Be as active as you can. You might have more appetite if you take a short walk or do other light exercise. Studies show that many people with cancer feel better when they exercise each day.
- Think about tube feedings. Sometimes, you may not be able to eat enough to stay strong and a feeding tube may be a good option. Your doctor or dietitian will discuss this with you if he or she thinks it will help you.
- Tell your doctor if you are having eating problems, such as nausea, vomiting, or changes in how foods taste and smell.

After Cancer Treatment

Many eating problems go away when treatment ends.

Once you finish cancer treatment, many of your eating problems will get better. Some eating problems, such as weight loss and changes in taste or smell, may last longer than your course of treatment. If you had treatment for head and neck cancer or surgery to remove part of

your stomach or intestines, then eating problems may always be part of your life.

Return to healthy eating

While healthy eating by itself cannot keep cancer from coming back, it can help you regain strength, rebuild tissue, and improve how you feel after treatment ends. Here are some ways to eat well after treatment ends:

- Prepare simple meals that you like and are easy to make.
- Cook 2 or 3 meals at a time. Eat fresh food.
- Eat many different kinds of foods. No single food has all the vitamins and nutrients you need.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. This includes eating raw and cooked vegetables, fruits, and fruit juices. These all have vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Eat whole wheat bread, oats, brown rice, or other whole grains and cereals. These have needed complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Add beans, peas, and lentils to your diet and eat them often.
- Go easy on fat, salt, sugar, alcohol, and smoked or pickled foods.
- Choose low-fat milk products.
- Eat small portions.

Eating problems that may be caused by certain cancer treatments

Cancer Treatment	What Sometimes Happens: Side Effects
Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surgery may slow digestion (how the body uses food). It can also affect eating if you have surgery of the mouth, stomach, intestines, or

	<p>throat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After surgery, some people have trouble getting back to normal eating. If this happens, you may need to get nutrients through a feeding tube or IV (through a needle directly into a vein). <p><i>Note:</i> Surgery increases your need for good nutrition. If you are weak or underweight, you may need to eat a high-protein, high calorie diet before surgery.</p>
Radiation Therapy	<p>Radiation therapy damages healthy cells as well as cancer cells. When you have radiation therapy to the head, neck, chest, or esophagus, you may have eating problems such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in your sense of taste • Dry mouth • Sore mouth • Sore throat • Tooth and jaw problems • Trouble swallowing <p>When you have radiation therapy to the abdomen or pelvis, you may have problems with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cramps, bloating • Diarrhea • Nausea • Vomiting

<p>Chemotherapy</p>	<p>Chemotherapy claims to work by stopping or slowing the growth of cancer cells, which grow and divide quickly. But it can also harm healthy cells that grow and divide quickly, such as those in the lining of your mouth and intestines. Damage to healthy cells can lead to side effects. Some of these side effects can lead to eating problems, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appetite loss • Changes in your sense of taste • Constipation • Diarrhea • Nausea • Sore mouth • Sore throat • Vomiting • Weight gain • Weight loss
<p>Biological Therapy (Immunotherapy)</p>	<p>Biological therapy can affect your interest in food or ability to eat. Problems can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in your sense of taste • Diarrhea • Dry mouth • Appetite loss • flu-like symptoms, such as muscle aches, fatigue, and fever • Nausea • Sore mouth • Vomiting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight loss, severe
Hormone Therapy	<p>Hormone therapy can affect your interest in food or ability to eat.</p> <p>Problems can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in your sense of taste • Diarrhea

Lists of Foods and Drinks

Types	Liquids
Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bouillon • Clear broth • Consommé • Mushrooms and baby corn soup • Soup that has been strained or put through a blender
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit juices • Fruit-flavored drinks • Fruit punch • Tomato juice • Vegetable juice • Milkshakes • Cranberry or grape juice • Plain water • Flavored water • Weak tea with no caffeine

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates and other concentrates in milk or water
Desserts and snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit Mix with custard • Gelatin • Jelly • Popsicles • Yogurts • Pudding • Watercress • Avocado • Bananas • Papaya (Ripe) • Guava • Figs • Dried fruit (such as apricots, dates, prunes, and raisins) • Berries (such as blueberries, blackberries, and strawberries) • Nuts and Seeds (such as pumpkin or sunflower)
Main Meal--replacements and supplements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutritional supplements • Predigested Meals • Wheat Roti any kind • Wheat or Raggi bread (avoid White bread and Maida) • Curd and Rice • Soya Meal • Cheese—hard or soft • Cottage cheese

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sprouted or fermented foods• Eggs (including yolk) in any form• Fish (poached or broiled)• Chicken boiled or baked• Potatoes, (with skin) boiled• Sweet Potato boiled or steamed• Yams• Cabbage steamed or boiled• Carrots (cooked)• Oats• Bran or whole-grain cereals• Bran muffins
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Eating Hints for Cancer Patients

Eating during cancer can become quite a difficult prospect. Many cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation, adversely affect your appetite. Nausea and vomiting are common side effects of cancer treatment. However, even if cancer patients have no appetite, good nutrition is essential to maintaining the strength to fight cancer. Furthermore, certain foods should be avoided during cancer treatment, as an unhealthy diet may have an adverse effect on cancer treatment.

Foods to Avoid

1. A diet high in refined sugar and simple carbohydrates may reduce the prognosis for cancer survival. According to Nutrition MD, these foods, along with certain unhealthy proteins and fats, can actually encourage cancer cells to grow and increase the chances of the cancer spreading.

2. Certain other foods, including spicy or fatty foods, can exacerbate side effects associated with chemotherapy and radiation, including nausea, vomiting and mouth sores.
3. Avoid all commercially processed foods and fad fast foods including biscuits and cookies. Deep fried and microwaved foods.
4. Sugar substitutes of all kinds.
5. Alcohol in all forms.

Foods to Eat

Although eating certain foods will not necessarily increase your chances of surviving cancer, it is essential that you maintain proper nutrition so your body is strong enough to undergo potentially lifesaving treatment. This can be difficult when you have no appetite as a result of cancer therapies. Several helpful suggestions regarding a good diet for cancer patients have been offered.

- Patients should eat whenever they are hungry, instead of trying to eat set meals. It is better to eat small amounts when you have an appetite than to try to force yourself to eat a large meal when you do not wish to.
- Bland foods are preferred.
- Cold foods may be more appetizing than hot foods.
- Drink plenty of cool water and clear beverages or soups but avoid doing so during the main meal.
- Try to avoid eating alone.

Nutritional Therapy

Although it is suggested that there is a link between a diet high in fruits and vegetables and a reduced risk of certain forms of cancer including lung cancer, breast cancer and prostate cancer, Nutrition MD states that no such link has been proven between diet and the success rate of cancer treatment. Thus, although diet can adversely

impact your chances of recovering from cancer, a therapeutic diet will not necessarily increase your chances for survival.

However, a diet high in fiber may help reduce the risk of getting enteritis, a common condition caused by radiation and characterized by inflammation of the intestines.

Furthermore, chewing ice chips and taking amino acid supplements may reduce your chances of getting mouth sores as a result of chemotherapy.