



# NUTRITION DURING CANCER TREATMENT

Cancer treatment can affect your eating in many ways. If you are having a difficult time eating, try these helpful tips.

Good nutrition will help you keep up your strength, fight infection, and prevent weight loss. Do not limit fat and cholesterol intake unless otherwise advised. Drink liquids throughout the day to stay hydrated. Stay active to help improve your mood and appetite.

## High Calorie and Protein Foods

- Eat protein-rich food at each meal and snack:
  - Fish, chicken, turkey, beef, pork
  - Milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt
  - Peanut or other nut butters, tofu, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds
  - Well-cooked eggs or egg substitute
- Add “fats” to foods such as hummus, avocados, olives, nuts and seeds. Add extra oil, butter, or buttery spreads. Use regular (not low-fat) salad dressings, mayonnaise, milk and dairy products. Add grated cheese to potatoes, pasta and casseroles.
- Have snacks between meals if you are losing weight.
- Drink liquids that have calories such as milk, soy milk, juice, shakes, smoothies, or cocoa. Add powdered milk or protein powder to shakes and smoothies. Make double strength milk by adding 1 cup powdered milk to 1-quart whole milk.

## Tummy Tamers for Nausea

- Do not skip meals. An empty stomach may make nausea worse.
- Eat five or six small meals per day instead of three large meals. Avoid lying down flat for about an hour after meals.
- Snack on dry foods throughout the day, such as soda crackers, bread sticks, or toast.
- Try cold foods like sandwiches, salads, cheese, yogurt, sherbet, Jell-O®, frozen fruit bars, and Popsicles®.
- Try ginger ale, lemon lime soda, ginger tea or ginger candy.
- Drink liquids between meals. Eating and drinking at the same time can make you feel bloated. Use a covered cup with a straw to cut down the smell of beverages.
- Avoid greasy, fried, spicy, or foods that have strong odors.
- If vomiting, consider using Pedialyte® or sports drinks.

## Help Your Taste Buds

- Add extra flavor to foods using herbs, barbecue sauce, ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, and other seasonings.
- To improve flavor, marinate foods using barbecue/teriyaki sauce, salad dressing, or other marinades.
- Add orange, lemon, lime, vinegar, or pickles to flavor foods. Avoid tart foods if you have a sore mouth or throat.
- If foods have a salty, bitter, or acid taste, try sweet foods or sweeten foods with honey or other sweeteners.
- Try new foods or foods you did not like before.
- Use plastic utensils to help lessen the metallic taste.
- Lemon drops, mints, chewing gum, or lemonade can help between meals.

## Soothers for a Sore Mouth

- Choose soft foods like scrambled eggs, macaroni and cheese, tofu, mashed potato, sweet potato, cooked cereal, yogurt, cottage cheese, custard, poi, pudding, papaya, banana, and applesauce.
- Cut foods into small pieces and moisten with gravy or sauces.
- Use a straw to help avoid painful areas when drinking.
- Have cold or room temperature foods.
- Avoid foods and drinks that can hurt your mouth such as:
  - Citrus foods (oranges, lemon, grapefruit, tomatoes)
  - Vinegar, alcohol, or salty foods
  - Spicy foods (hot sauces, curry, salsa, chili peppers)
  - Hard, crunchy foods (raw vegetables, crackers, chips)
- Suck on ice chips
- Mix ¼ teaspoon baking soda, ⅛ teaspoon salt, and 1 cup warm water for a mouth rinse. Rinse your mouth three to four times a day. Spit out the rinse. Do not swallow it. Do not use mouthwash that contains alcohol.

## Wet Your Whistle for Dry Mouth

- Sip on water throughout the day, carry a water bottle.
- Choose soft, moist foods. Add extra sauces, gravies, dressings, syrup and margarine. Have soups with meals.
- Tart foods and drinks, such as lemonade, may help you make more saliva. Avoid if you have a sore mouth/throat.

- Chew sugar-free gum or suck on sugar-free hard candy, frozen fruit, popsicles, and ice chips. Avoid too much if you are having problems with diarrhea

### Diarrhea

- Start with banana, white rice, applesauce, white toast, okai or jook (soft rice), decaffeinated tea.
- Add other foods such as fish, chicken (no skin), lean meats, tofu, eggs, oatmeal, pasta, white rice, potato, crackers, well cooked vegetables, and canned fruits in juice.
- Have smaller, more frequent meals. Drink just a small amount of liquid at meals.
- Throughout the day, drink liquids such as water, diluted juice, or sports drinks, at room temperature and between meals to prevent dehydration. Consider using a rehydration drink like Pedialyte® if you are having frequent diarrhea.
- Avoid alcohol; avoid or limit caffeine, carbonated, and sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Avoid spicy and fatty foods.
- Limit high-fiber foods such as raw fruits and vegetables, brown rice, and whole grain foods.
- Limit gas-forming foods, such as cooked dry beans, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and onions.
- If you do not tolerate regular dairy milk, choose lactose-free milk, soy milk or almond milk instead.

### Constipation

- Drink at least 8 cups of liquids a day, unless advised not to.
- Try warm or hot liquids like coffee or tea.
- Try warmed prune juice (6 to 8 ounces), 1 to 2 times a day.
- Check with your doctor if you should eat more high fiber foods such as legumes, lentils, whole wheat bread, nuts, oatmeal, bran cereals, brown rice, sweet potato, fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Be as active each day as you are able.

### When You're Feeling Tired

- Keep ready-to-eat meals and snacks available such as peanut butter, tuna, frozen meals, canned soups, granola bars, trail mix, cheese and crackers, and eggs.
- Keep liquid nutrition supplement drinks chilled and ready to grab when needed.
- Have high calorie snacks/beverages throughout the day.

### Practice Safe Food Handling

- Wash your hands before you prepare or eat foods.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked meats, fish or eggs.

- Wash fruits/vegetables thoroughly under running water.
- Keep hot foods hot, and cold foods cold.
- Place leftovers in the refrigerator right away.
- If you are not sure if a food is safe, throw it out.

Try these ideas and recipes if you are not able to eat much or are losing weight.

#### Fruit Shake

1 cup whole milk\* or nutrition supplement drink

1 banana or 1 cup of any fruit

1 cup vanilla ice cream

*Blend together for a high calorie shake.*

#### Fortified Jell-O®

1 pkg Jell-O® (3-ounce box)

1 cup boiling water

1 cup yogurt, plain or fruited

*Dissolve Jell-O® in water. Allow to cool for a few minutes. Add yogurt and whisk with fork or wire whisk. Refrigerate until set.*

#### Chia Seed Pudding

¼ cup chia seeds

½ cup coconut milk

½ cup soy milk

Flavoring of choice: Cocoa powder, cinnamon, vanilla or other extracts, or fruit

*Combine ingredients in a jar with a lid. Shake well. Sweeten with a little honey or agave as needed. Chill for at least 2 hours. Stir if clumpy. Optional: Add flavoring just before eating so you can vary the flavor for each portion.*

#### Sherbet Shake

½ cup orange juice

½ cup whole milk\*

1 cup sherbet (any flavor)

*Blend together for a refreshing drink.*

#### Orange Freeze

½ can 7-up® or Sprite®

1 cup orange sherbet, softened

*Combine ingredients and mix with a spoon or wire whisk. This drink is especially good if you feel nauseated.*

*\*Substitute soy or lactose-free milk if you are lactose intolerant.*

## Nutrition Supplement Drinks

- An easy way to get more nutrition
- Drinks such as Boost® or Ensure® can be purchased at:
  - Kaiser Permanente clinic pharmacies
  - Kaiser Permanente Moanalua Medical Center Sunrise Café
  - Costco, most supermarkets and drugstores
- For recipes using nutrition supplement drinks visit:
  - [Boost.com/recipes](http://Boost.com/recipes)
  - [Ensure.com/recipes](http://Ensure.com/recipes)

## Easy Snack Ideas

- Avocado toast
- Bagel with cheese
- Bean dip with melted cheese and salsa, served with tortilla or tortilla chips
- Boiled peanuts
- Buttered popcorn
- Cereal with milk or cream
- Cheese and crackers
- Chia pudding
- Cocoa made with whole milk
- Dried fruits and/or roasted nuts
- Edamame
- Fruit and cottage cheese
- Fruit smoothies with yogurt, tofu, or protein powder
- Guacamole and chips
- Hard boiled or deviled eggs
- Milk shakes
- Nutrition supplement drink
- Peanut butter on crackers or apple wedges
- Pizza with veggies
- Pudding made with whole milk
- Saimin with egg or fishcake
- Sandwich half
- Soup and crackers with butter or hummus
- Trail mix or granola bar
- Vegetables and spinach dip
- Yogurt

## When do I call my doctor?

- Let your doctor know if you have any problems eating. Your doctor can help you to manage nausea, constipation, sore or dry mouth, and other problems.
- Call your doctor if you have pain, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting.
- Check with your doctor before you take any vitamin or herbal supplements.

## When do I see a dietitian?

Make an appointment to see one of our Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) if you are:

- Having a hard time eating
  - Losing weight
  - Interested in learning more about healthy eating
- An RDN can create a meal plan to help you meet your nutrition needs using foods that you like and are able to eat.

## Resources

- National Cancer Institute  
Booklet: Eating Hints Before, During and After Treatment  
Call 1-800-422-6237 to request a free copy or visit: [cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/eating-hints](http://cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/eating-hints)
- American Cancer Society  
Booklet: Nutrition for the Person with Cancer During Treatment  
Call 1-800-227-2345 to request a free copy or visit: [cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition](http://cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition)
- Keep Foods Safe  
For tips on food preparation and proper storage visit: [foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe](http://foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe)

## Important Phone Numbers

After Hours Advice Nurse:

Oahu.....	808-432-7700
Neighbor Islands.....	1-800-467-3011

If you think you may be experiencing a medical emergency, please call 911.

*This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your doctor or other health care clinician.*