Eating Well During Treatment

Here are 10 healthy eating tips.

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Cancer treatment can feel like a whirlwind at times—you have to think about medication, doctor's visits, which treatment options to pursue and more. Eating well is one of the most important ways you can take care of yourself during treatment. Good nutrition maintains your energy and strength, helps you to heal and supports your immune system when you need it most. Although there's no solid evidence that eating certain foods can prevent cancer relapse, people who stick to a healthy diet have a lower overall risk of cancer.

Cancer treatment not only changes your nutritional needs, but some of its side effects can make meeting those needs more difficult. If you're feeling nauseous, try eating small snacks throughout the day instead of a few big meals. If you experience lack of appetite or weight loss during treatment, try filling up on foods with more protein and other nutrients. Sometimes it helps to add high-calorie extras such as cream, peanut butter or honey. On the other hand, if you're gaining weight you don't want, focus on nutritious low-fat, low-calorie foods and cut back on salt, which can cause swelling.

Fatigue can make it hard to shop and cook. Before a treatment session, stock up on groceries and foods that can be prepared in advance. Don't be afraid to ask family and friends for help!

It's important to communicate with your care team during treatment. If you're having trouble eating, talk to your doctor or nurse to see whether your medications can be adjusted to alleviate symptoms that make it difficult to eat well. If you're malnourished, it's important to get medical help so you can receive the nutrients you need. Keeping your body well nourished is part of living a healthy life during and after treatment.

10 Healthy Eating Tips

1. Try peppermint, ginger or medicinal cannabis to reduce nausea.
2. Avoid greasy and spicy foods and those with strong odors.
3. After eating, rest sitting up instead of lying down.
4. Replace lost fluids with clear liquids, such as broths and sports drinks.
5. To alleviate constipation, drink lots of fluids and eat more fiber.
6. Try nutrient-rich milkshakes and smoothies if you have mouth or throat pain.
7. Stock up on simple, nutritious snacks, like yogurt, nuts and granola bars.
8. Cook food in large batches and freeze into meal-sized portions.

9. Try using plastic instead of metal utensils if you’re bothered by changes in taste.
10. Get moderate exercise to stimulate your appetite.

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