

Nutrition

Some people have difficulty eating when they have cancer or are having cancer treatment.

Eating the right kinds and amounts of food before, during and after your treatment can help you:

- feel better and stay strong
- prevent unwanted weight changes
- improve your energy level
- support your immune system
- heal and recover after your treatment

Your cancer or cancer treatment may cause:

- lack of appetite
- nausea and vomiting
- sore mouth and/or throat
- bowel changes (constipation or diarrhea)
- fatigue (weak and tired)
- changes in taste and smell

To help you eat better:

- Try five to six small meals a day instead of three large ones. This will provide you with energy throughout the day.
- Try a variety of foods. Food that didn't taste good before, might taste better now.
- Stock your pantry and freezer with favourite and easy to prepare foods such as canned soup, pudding, canned fish, cheese, eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, cereal, milk and bread. Family and friends may be able to help you do this.
- Stay as active as possible. Even a short walk each day may help improve your appetite.

Ideas to add extra calories:

- Add whole milk or cream to: cereal, cream soups, milkshakes, pudding, custard, mashed potatoes and cheese sauces.
- Snack on dried fruit, cereal, yogurt, ice cream or milkshakes.
- Add extra butter, margarine, vegetable oil, sauces or gravy to mashed potatoes, bread, pasta, rice, cooked vegetables, hot cereals and soups.
- Try ready to drink liquid nutritional supplements (e.g. Boost, Ensure). They are easy to use and high in protein, calories, vitamins and minerals.
- Talk to a registered dietitian at CancerCare Manitoba for other food choices and ideas.

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Ideas to add extra protein:

- Add grated cheese to soup, mashed potatoes, vegetable sauces and casseroles.
- Snack on hard cheese, cottage cheese, nuts, seeds, eggs and canned fish.
- Add peanut butter or other nut butters to sliced fruit, toast, muffins, crackers, ice cream and milkshakes.
- Talk to a registered dietitian at CancerCare Manitoba for other food choices and ideas.

Fluids are important for your body to function well

- If you don't drink enough fluids you may feel tired, lightheaded and/or sick to your stomach.
- If you are losing weight choose fluids that contain calories such as: milk, juice, milkshakes or liquid nutritional supplements (e.g. Boost, Ensure).
- Drink less fluid with your meals if you feel full quickly.

Ways to increase your fluid intake:

- Carry a water bottle.
- Take small sips of fluid throughout the day.
- Try other types of fluids like popsicles, gelatin, applesauce or soup.

See the dietitian if you are having trouble:

- eating
- maintaining your weight
- managing side effects
- meeting special dietary needs (e.g. diabetes, vegetarian)

To make an appointment with a registered dietitian at CancerCare Manitoba Patient and Family Support Services call (204) 787-2109 or toll free 1-866-561-1026.

