

Treatment and Nutrition:

How to Help Manage Side Effects

NUTRITION & CHEMOTHERAPY

Chemotherapy treatments may cause some unpleasant side effects.

These side effects may include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Changes in taste and smell
- Poor appetite

Medications are available to help control all of these side effects. Please be sure to discuss these options with your healthcare team. If a side effect continues to persist, talk to your doctor; another medication may be more effective.

Maintaining good nutrition is recommended throughout your treatment. Weight loss should not be considered a goal at this time, unless it is recommended by your physician. Your dietitian will be able to work with you on suggestions for weight maintenance, gain, and/or loss goals.

While going through treatment, there are no foods that are restricted; however there are foods that may cause increased distress.

Try to avoid:

- Fatty and fried type foods
- Spicy and heavily seasoned foods
- Very sweet foods such as candies, pastries and cake
- Caffeinated beverages
- Alcohol

If uncontrolled weight loss occurs there are several high calorie supplements that work well for most patients.

These include meal replacements such as:

- Ensure[®]
- Boost[®]
- Enlive[®]
- Carnation[®] Instant Breakfast[®]

There are also recipes for fortifying foods and pre-made fortified supplements and modulators that are available. Your dietitian will be able to provide you with available samples and make recommendations that are appropriate for you.



NUTRITION & RADIATION THERAPY

Radiation treatment may lead to specific side effects depending on where you will be treated. The side effect that is common with most radiation treatment patients is fatigue.

If you will be treated for a head and neck type of cancer you may experience soreness in the throat and mouth region. Salivary glands may be compromised as well. Foods that are recommended:

- Puréed food
- Soft foods
- Shakes
- Nutritional supplements such as Ensure[®]

If you will be treated for cancer in the abdominal region you may experience diarrhea, and some nausea and vomiting.

Choose more:

- Non-acidic juices
- Caffeine-free and non-carbonated drinks
- Lean protein sources - boiled or baked
- Low-fat to fat-free dairy products
- Fresh or canned fruits
- Refined grains



COMPLIMENTARY & ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Complimentary and alternative therapies are not meant to cure disease. Complimentary therapies are supportive methods used to complement conventional evidence-based treatment, according to the American Cancer Society.

These include but are not limited to:

- Yoga for relaxation and stress reduction
- Ginger to help decrease nausea
- Meditation for stress reduction

Treatments that are promoted as cancer cures are referred to as alternative therapies. These may have been scientifically tested and found to be ineffective, or they may have never been tested and are unproven. It is important to let your healthcare team know of any complementary and/or alternative therapies that you may be currently taking or may be thinking of taking. Some of these can actually be harmful.



SAMPLE MEAL PLAN

To help alleviate some of the side effects associated with treatment try to consume 6-7 small meals throughout the day.

For Example:

- 7:00 a.m. Cereal with milk
- 9:00 a.m. Low-fat cottage cheese with fresh fruit
- 12:00 p.m. ½ of a grilled chicken sandwich with a side salad
- 2:00 p.m. Hard boiled egg with fresh fruit and/or vegetable
- 4:00 p.m. Vegetable soup with whole grain rice and grilled salmon
- 6:00 p.m. Fruit smoothie

AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Some side effects may continue after treatment depending on your diagnosis and treatment plan. Discuss this issue with your physician and dietitian.

Once your treatments are completed and your side effects have resolved, discuss with your dietitian what diet would be appropriate for you.

Some healthy tips to consider after treatment:

- Increase physical activity
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Consume a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Choose more whole grain products and legumes
- Eat less of processed foods
- Choose lean sources of protein
- Continue to consume small frequent meals throughout the day.



1180 N. Indian Canyon Drive, Suite E218
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 416-4800



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