

Nutrition and Your Well-Being

When you are being treated for cancer, nutrition is an important part of your care. Even if you are eating less than usual, regular meals can help you feel stronger and provide more energy. Use the tips in this handout and talk to your registered dietitian (RD) about other ways that you can feel better.

Nutrition Tips

- Try to eat six to eight small meals and snacks throughout the day. Choose foods that are easy to fix and easy to eat.
- If you find that meats are difficult to eat or you don't like how they taste, try chopped or ground meats mixed with a sauce or in a casserole.
- Fruits and juices are usually easy to consume and may perk up your taste for other foods. Include them with your meals.
- Allow friends and family to prepare meals or shop for you. Don't hesitate to accept their offers of help. Be sure to tell them if there are certain foods that you can't eat very well or don't like.
- Breakfast is the best meal of the day for many people. Try eating a bigger breakfast to keep your energy up during the day.
- If you are physically able, try to increase your activity level by walking or exercising lightly.
- Keep commercially prepared liquid medical nutritional supplements on hand for those days when you just don't feel like eating.

- Constipation can contribute to a poor appetite. For relief, try adding 1 or 2 tablespoons of wheat bran to your food, or drinking warm prune juice three or four times a day.

Concerns to Share with Your Doctor

- Tell your doctor if you have pain, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting. Prescription medications may help you feel better and lessen your symptoms.
- If you have constipation, ask your doctor whether you should start a daily bowel care program, which may include the use of stool softeners or laxatives.
- An appetite stimulant can be helpful for some people. Talk to your doctor about whether one could help you.