



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Good Nutrition During Cancer Treatment

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Good nutrition during cancer treatment can help you keep up your strength, prevent weight loss, fight infection, and feel better. But sometimes, eating well during cancer treatment can be a challenge. You may not feel hungry, or food may taste different than it usually does. Some cancer treatments can cause mouth sores, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. All these things can make it hard to eat.

There are many things you can do at home to get the nutrition you need during cancer treatment. If you find that you still need help, talk with your doctor or other health care professional. He or she may advise you to work with a dietitian to help you find ways to get enough nutrition.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Include favorite foods in your meals. This may make eating more enjoyable.
- Include protein foods in your diet every day. Good choices include lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, cheese, cooked dry beans, peanut butter, and nuts and seeds. Add powdered milk to other foods (such as pudding or soups) to boost the protein.
- Practice safe food handling. Wash your hands before you prepare or eat food. Do not eat raw or undercooked meat or eggs. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. If you are not sure whether a food is safe, throw it out.
- If you do not feel very hungry, try to eat smaller amounts of food more often. For example, try having 5 or 6 small meals throughout the day instead of 2 or 3 large meals.
- Take a short walk before you eat, if possible. It may make you feel hungrier.
- If you have trouble keeping your weight up, pick high-calorie foods. Add butter, honey, or brown sugar to foods to make them taste better. Use sauces and gravies. Add oil, butter, or margarine

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when you cook. Use mayonnaise and sour cream to help make foods taste better and to add calories.

- If the smell of food makes you feel sick, try eating cold or room-temperature foods. It also may help to have someone else prepare meals so that you do not have to smell the food while it is cooking.
- If you have trouble eating solid food, try liquid meal supplements, such as Ensure, Boost, or instant breakfast drinks. They will give you both calories and protein. Soups, smoothies, milk shakes, and milk also are good liquid sources of nutrition.
- Keep snacks around that are easy to prepare and eat, such as soft granola bars, string cheese, frozen grapes, pudding, custard, ice cream, and Popsicles.
- Drink plenty of fluid each day. Good choices include water, fruit juice, milk, and other beverages that have calories and do not contain caffeine or alcohol. If you have a hard time drinking enough fluid, try carrying a water bottle with you during the day. If you have kidney, heart, or liver disease and have to limit fluids, talk with your doctor or other health care professional before you increase your fluid intake.
- Check with your doctor or other health care professional before you take any vitamin, mineral, or herbal supplements. Do not take more than 100% of the daily value (DV) for any vitamin or mineral unless your doctor or other health care professional tells you to.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. As a partner in your health care, you can do things like keep all scheduled visits, be sure you know the results of all tests and labs ordered as part of your care, and keep an up-to-date personal list of the medicines you are taking. Know how to contact us between visits, and call your doctor or other health care professional if you have signs that you are having problems.

When should you call your doctor or other health care professional?

- You would like help with planning what to eat during cancer treatment.
- You have questions or concerns.

How can you learn more about nutrition during cancer treatment?

- *Log on:* members.kp.org. Search for **healthy eating** in the **Health encyclopedia**.

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