

▶ NAUSEA 1

▶ TASTE
CHANGES 2

treating Cancer

HELPING YOU MAINTAIN GOOD NUTRITION BY EATING WELL

Good nutrition is especially important to those with cancer. In addition to changing food habits, cancer treatments may also have side effects, making eating more difficult than before. This newsletter aims to provide helpful suggestions for some common problems encountered by those being treated for cancer.

Nausea

Some people with cancer may have nausea with or without vomiting. Be sure to tell your healthcare team if you feel nauseated or are vomiting since some medications may help to control this. Here are some ideas for the next time you feel nauseous:

DO:

- Sip fluids throughout the day (ie. flat ginger ale, fruit juices, jello)
- Eat smaller amounts of food every 1 to 2 hours throughout the day instead of 3 large ones
- Eat dry foods (ie. crackers, toast, dry cereals, breadsticks) when you wake up and every few hours during the day
- Suck on ice chips or hard candy
- Rinse your mouth with club soda before and after meals



DON'T

- Eat greasy, spicy or overly sweet foods
- Eat foods with a strong odour
- Eat in a room that is warm or has cooking odours
- Lie down for at least 1 hour after eating

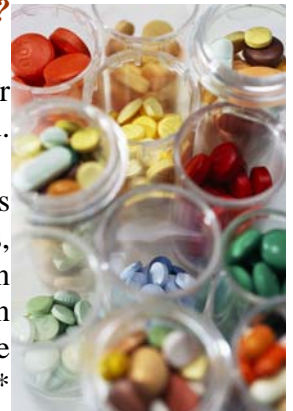


Multivitamins and Chemotherapy

Q: Should I take a multi-vitamin and/or mineral supplements?

A: If you have not been able to eat normally for **more than 2 weeks**, talk to your healthcare team about whether a multivitamin would be of benefit to you.

The literature available has not proven that taking vitamins in small or large doses helps to prevent or reverse cancer. Some people with cancer take large amounts of vitamins, minerals and other dietary supplements to try and boost their immune system or even destroy cancer cells. Some of these substances can be harmful, especially when taken in large doses. In fact, large doses of some vitamins and minerals may reduce the effectiveness of chemotherapy and radiation therapy.*



Feeling Tired (Fatigue)

You may feel tired due to the effects of treatment, the type of cancer you have, loss of appetite, lack of exercise, and the stress of coping with cancer. Fatigue from chemotherapy is different from the normal feelings of being tired since it is not always alleviated with rest and it may remain even after treatment ends. Here are some tips on what may help:

- Eat a balanced diet which includes protein, carbohydrates and fat
- Try to eat small amounts of food throughout the day, even if you aren't hungry
- Eat when you have the most energy

:: RECIPE :: Yogurt Shake

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup (200mL) plain yogurt
- ¼ cup (50mL) skim milk powder
- ½ cup (125mL) juice
- 1 tbsp (15mL) sugar or honey

Mix all ingredients together and blend well. Refrigerate.

Makes 1 serving
365 calories per serving
20g protein per serving

ASK A DIETITIAN

Q: Can I drink alcohol if I'm on treatment?

A: Alcohol is low in nutrients, but if it increases your appetite and helps you enjoy a meal, talk with your healthcare team, as small amounts may be acceptable.

One serving of alcohol is:
- Beer: 12oz (350mL) bottle (5% alcohol)
- Wine: 5oz (145mL) glass (12% alcohol)
- Spirits: 1.5oz (45mL) (40% alcohol)

Alcohol may interfere with your medications and/or treatment so be sure to talk with your healthcare team first!

Changes in Taste or Smell

Cancer treatment may change your sense of taste and smell and it may affect your appetite. Below are some tips that may help:

To improve tastes:

- Rinse your mouth before and after eating with club soda or water
- Serve foods at cold or at room temperature
- Eat fresh vegetables instead of canned ones
- Decrease bitter and salty tastes with sugar; decrease sweet taste with lemon juice and salt.
- Try using plastic cutlery and glass cooking pots
- Keep your mouth clean by brushing your teeth and rinsing your mouth
- Marinate meats so they are more tender
- Try flavouring foods with new tastes and spices (ie. onion, garlic, basil, oregano, barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup)
- Try lemon drops, mints or gum to help get rid of unpleasant after-tastes
- If red meat tastes strange, try chicken, eggs, fish, cheese or other protein-rich foods
- Try new and different foods and beverages!!



To improve smells:

- Avoid eating in rooms that are too warm or stuffy
- Drink through a straw and cover beverages
- Find foods that do not need to be cooked
- Serve foods at room temperature to reduce strong smells



Got a question you would like answered for the next issue?

For more information on nutrition & cancer, contact

Sonia Raju, Registered Dietitian

(416) 756-6045 or sraju@nygh.on.ca

References:

1. Canadian Cancer Society *Good Nutrition: A guide for people with cancer*. 2007
2. American Cancer Society. *Nutrition for the Person with Cancer*. 2008. www.cancer.org

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