

Department of
Nutrition & Dietetics

Nutrition During Cancer Treatment



Importance of Nutrition During Cancer Treatment

Having good nutrition during cancer treatment can help to:

- ✓ Keep up the body's strength and energy levels
- ✓ Keep up the body's immunity to reduce the risk of infections
- ✓ Improve tolerance to treatment-related side effects
- ✓ Improve recovery and healing post treatment

Nutritional Goals During Treatment

1. Prevent and/or minimise unintentional weight loss
2. Ensure adequate energy and protein intake to maintain weight, muscles, immunity and strength:
 - Energy sources include carbohydrates such as bread, noodles, rice, porridge, chapatti, thosai and healthy oils such as canola, sesame, olive and soft margarine
 - Protein sources include fish, meat, chicken, duck, eggs, tofu, milk, soymilk, legumes, nuts
3. Have adequate hydration. Aim for 6-8 glasses of fluids daily from sources such as milk, soy milk, sports drinks, juices, water unless you have been advised by your doctor to restrict fluid intake

Note!

Healthy eating advice (e.g. low fat, low sugar, low salt) may not be suitable during treatment, especially if the side effects of treatment have affected your weight, appetite and food intake.

This may mean eating foods that are not normally recommended when you are in good health. For instance, you may need high-fat, high-calorie foods to keep up your weight, or take cool foods like ice cream or milk shakes due to sores in your mouth and throat.

Monitoring Your Nutrition

Self-monitoring of your weight and food intake is important. Unintended weight loss will weaken your immune system and affect your ability to tolerate cancer treatment.

You should plan to weigh yourself weekly during cancer treatment and take note of your food intake.

Check If You Have:

Unplanned weight loss

(loss of ≥ 3 kg in 1-3 months or $\geq 5-6$ kg in 6 months is concerning)

Eating lesser than before

(especially if less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of your usual in the past 5 days or more)

If you have **at least 1** of the above, you can let your doctor know to refer you to a dietitian who will advise you on your meal plans and help ensure that you receive the necessary nutrition.

Meanwhile you can scan the QR code or visit the web link (provided at the back of this pamphlet) for more resources relating to poor appetite and common nutrition related side effects of cancer treatment such as nausea/vomiting/diarrhea or constipation.



Clinics B2
TTSH Medical Centre, Level B2
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