

# Eating Well Through Cancer Therapy

*Eating is usually a fun and pleasurable part of our life but when faced with cancer, eating may become very challenging. When you are being treated for cancer, which may include receiving chemotherapy, radiation and surgery, nutrition is an important part of your care. If you are eating less than usual, improving your nutritional intake can help you feel stronger and provide more energy.*

**The benefits of eating well during cancer therapy include:**

- Coping with side effects that may occur.
- Better tolerance with your treatments.
- Fight infection, maintain strength.
- Prevent your body tissue from breaking down.
- Heal any post-treatment wounds.
- Feel good and have a positive outlook.

**Guidelines that will help keep you on top of your nutritional health:**

- Eat a nutritionally adequate diet that supplies sufficient calories and protein.
- Eat a variety of foods from the major food groups: bread/grains, vegetables, fruits, milk/yogurt/cheese, and meat/poultry/fish/eggs/beans and nuts group.
- Be proactive and manage your cancer treatment related side effects.
- Preserve your body nutrition store and main your weight during treatment.

***It is important to understand that sometimes nutrition recommendations during cancer treatment may be different***



***than the recommended healthy eating guidelines, due to the possible side effects from the cancer therapy that may keep you from eating this way. Just know that these diet changes are temporary and once you have completely recovered from your treatments, the focus as a cancer survivor will be to maintain good nutrition, achieve a healthy weight and keep physically active.***

# Eating well through cancer therapy: nutrition tips

- Try to eat six small frequent meals and snacks throughout the day.
- Focus on foods that require little handling, preparation or effort to eat.
- Consume easy-to-eat foods and beverages, that are good sources of energy and protein.
- Maintain good hydration by consuming 8-10 cups of fluids a day.
- Keep nutritious snacks available at all times.
- Eat slowly and serve food attractively in a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere.
- Allow friends and family to prepare meals for you. Don't hesitate to accept offers of help with shopping and meal preparation.
- Take advantage of the times you feel well. Breakfast is often the best meal of the day for many people. Don't skip meals.
- If you are physically able, try to keep active by walking regularly or engage in some other physical activity you enjoy and can tolerate.
- Use medications as recommended by your physician to help manage any side effects that may interfere with your ability to eat well.
- If you have a loss of appetite, make homemade smoothies and shakes, or you can try commercially prepared liquid nutritional supplements.
- Rest when you are tired and have no energy and increase your activity when you feel better.
- If you have any questions or concerns about nutrition, ask to speak with the dietitian for individual guidance before, during and after your treatment here at Huntington Cancer Center.

*Our oncology dietitian offers nutrition counseling to cancer patients to help meet their nutritional needs and manage their symptoms while undergoing treatment, and as a cancer survivor.*

