

Nutrition Guidelines

Take an active role in your care and recovery to help reduce side effects—start by meeting all your dietary needs. Nutrition is critical when you're in radiation treatment, even if you aren't interested in eating. It is important to maintain your weight by consuming the recommended amount of calories, protein and other nutrients. By eating well you will gain strength and feel better during and after treatment.

- Work closely with the dietitian, and follow your personal dietary plan.
- Eat frequent, small meals during the day (five to six) rather than three large ones.
- Nibble on nutritious snacks.
- Make every bite count. Consume high-calorie, high-protein foods and beverages.
- Don't fill-up on low-calorie items such as broth, coffee, tea and diet drinks.
- Take advantage of the times you feel well to eat well. Breakfast is the best meal for many people.
- Try light exercise before meals.
- If you feel full too quickly, limit beverages with meals. Drink liquids 30 minutes to an hour before or after meals. Drink plenty of fluids between meals.
- Give low-fat, healthy food a chance. Be creative and try new recipes—the dietitian can help you with ideas.
- Focus on eating a variety of foods every day.
- Keep foods handy that require little to no preparation, or cook in advance and freeze meal-sized portions.
- Ask friends and family members to help with cooking and shopping.
- If eating difficulties persist, ask the dietitian about nutritional supplements such as Ensure, Instant Breakfast or Sustacal.
- Be alert to problems that contribute to poor appetite such as constipation, pain or nausea. Report them to your medical team.
- Arrange food and surroundings attractively to create a pleasant dining atmosphere.