

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING SIDE EFFECTS DURING CANCER TREATMENT

You may experience some side effects during your treatments, and it's important to discuss them with your healthcare team.

NAUSEA AFFECTS

2 OUT OF 3

PEOPLE WITH CANCER.¹

It's caused by cancer treatments, certain cancers, and sometimes by anxious or depressed feelings.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

- Avoid greasy, spicy and strong-smelling foods
- Try eating cold or room temperature foods
- Sip liquids slowly to stay hydrated
- Eat small meals and snacks throughout the day
- Use root ginger in your cooking, boil slices of ginger root in water when making tea, or chew on a small piece of candied ginger
- Note when you eat and how you feel before and after treatment (you may learn that you have less nausea when you eat a light snack before treatment)
- Let your healthcare team know you're experiencing nausea, they may recommend medications
- Have protein every time you eat to help settle your stomach
- Try eating crackers, dry toast, pretzels or breadsticks
- Rest after eating (be sure to sit up or recline with your head raised up)
- Open a window or turn on a fan for fresh air

POOR APPETITE AFFECTS NEARLY

60% OF PEOPLE

UNDERGOING CANCER TREATMENT.¹

Cancer treatment, cancer itself, fatigue, pain, and some medicines can take away your appetite.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

- Eat small meals and snacks during the day, even at bedtime
- Eat larger meals when you're feeling better
- Keep snacks handy, like dried fruit, nuts, peanut butter crackers, fig bars, or granola bars
- Choose foods that are soft and cool like yogurt and milkshakes, or frozen like sorbet or popsicles
- Sip on liquids during the day that have nutrition (milk, fruit juices, or soups)
- Keep mealtime as calm and relaxed as possible

TRY CONCENTRATING ON CALORIES AND PROTEIN:

FOR CALORIES

- Use olive oil on bread
- Spread peanut butter or other nut butters on toast, crackers or fruit
- Add some avocado slices to a sandwich

FOR PROTEIN

- Add extra meat, poultry, fish, or cheese to casseroles or soups

- Be flexible with food (foods that didn't appeal to you yesterday might taste good today)
- Talk with your dietitian for more ideas about what to eat when you don't have an appetite

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CONSTIPATION

Increase your water intake and fiber from whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Take a daily walk and drink room temperature prune juice to stay regular.



HEARTBURN

Sit upright when eating or drinking and eat small portions. Try to avoid lying down after you've eaten. If you need to lie down, use a pillow to keep your head up.



MOUTH SORES

Try salt or bicarbonate of soda mouth washes during the day. Just before bedtime, try a mix of glycerin and warm water, baking soda, or salt. In the morning you can brush your teeth as usual.



DIARRHEA

- Avoid fiber and increase fluids to stay hydrated
- Drink plenty of mild, room-temperature, clear liquids during the day
- Drink at least 1 cup (8 ounces) of liquid after each loose bowel movement
- Drink and eat small portions of food that provide sodium and potassium (two minerals that your body loses when you have diarrhea)
 - » broths and soups
 - » crackers or pretzels
 - » fruit juices
 - » potatoes without skin
 - » sport drinks
 - » ripe bananas

POSITIVE WAYS TO FOCUS ON YOUR NUTRITION AS YOU PREPARE FOR AND BEGIN TREATMENT

Work with your healthcare team to:



CREATE A MEAL PLAN that meets your individual needs. It's important to remember to include protein in all your meals and snacks.



CHECK YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

If you have diabetes or prediabetes, it's important to check your blood sugar levels regularly and keep your levels within normal range.



MAINTAIN YOUR WEIGHT At this time, it's important to maintain your weight, even if you're overweight. Now is not the time to intentionally lose weight or diet.



EVALUATE YOUR ORAL HEALTH

Your dentist can clean your teeth, check for cavities, treat any infections, and show you how to maintain good oral health before starting treatment.



CONTINUE WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Find activities you can do, are enjoyable, and will help maintain your strength. Not moving, for instance staying in bed or a chair for long periods of time, can lead to muscle loss and fatigue.



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1. Kim ES, et al. Clin Cancer Res. 2018;24(22):5543-5551.