

NUTRITION AND WELLNESS

Nutrition and food are important factors in health and recovery during cancer treatment. Food challenges may begin when cancer, side effects, and appetite changes affect the patient's ability to eat or maintain proper nutrition.

Favorite foods or go-to beverages may not be the best choices for the patient. Perceptions about what is healthy to eat and what isn't healthy to eat can also be an issue. In addition, how favorite foods taste may change due to treatment. It is important for the caregiver to be supportive (but tactful) and help the patient to make good food choices.

Caregiver's Role in Nutrition

Food and food choices may be a touchy subject for your loved one. Remember that they may feel as though they have lost a lot of control over their life since being diagnosed with cancer. Yet, deciding when and what to eat are some of the few decisions still under the patient's control. At times, the patient may be resistant to eating. Try to encourage your loved one to eat but don't be too forceful. Cancer treatment is an emotionally challenging time. Don't let disagreements over food turn into full-blown fights or arguments. Reach out to the healthcare team for support and resources.

Many different considerations influence a cancer patient's food choices—health, treatment, nutrition guidelines, and social factors. For example, even though a patient may understand that healthy foods promote healing, if the patient feels nauseated after chemotherapy, they may not want to eat. A patient who cannot tolerate alcohol may feel social pressure to drink when out with friends. These examples show how different factors impact food choices.

Food provides valuable nutrients for cancer patients. Eating well during

cancer treatment helps to speed recovery, ease side effects, and keep the treatment plan running smoothly. However, your loved one may not feel up to making grocery lists, going grocery shopping, eating or preparing meals as they did before the onset of their illness. This is where you, as the caregiver, can help. Depending on the health of the patient, it might be helpful for you to assist with:

- ▶ Grocery shopping
- ▶ Meal preparation and cooking
- ▶ Encouraging the patient to make healthy food choices
- ▶ Managing the patient's treatment side effects.

To get started, ask the appropriate member of the healthcare team about specific foods or meal recommendations and restrictions, if any. A printed meal plan or food list is often the best approach to nutrition planning. Ask for a referral to a registered dietitian for additional help.

Nutrition for Cancer Patients

Here are some general guidelines for proper nutrition during cancer treatment. Always consult your loved one's

TIP

Nutrition advice is everywhere, but it's not all good information. Be cautious of nutrition advice online, in magazines or advertisements and from well-meaning family and friends. Make sure you get nutrition information from a reliable source by talking to a registered dietitian.



healthcare team for any specific guidelines or restrictions they need to follow.

Select a variety of fruits and vegetables every day

Fruits and vegetables offer the body antioxidants, which can help fight cancer. Choose a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables to get the greatest benefit. Aim to eat a minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

Choose protein-rich foods.

Protein helps the body to repair cells and tissues. It also helps the immune system to recover from illness. Try to include a source of lean protein at all meals and as snacks. Good sources of lean protein include:

- ▶ Chicken, fish, or turkey or other lean meats
- ▶ Eggs
- ▶ Low-fat dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese or dairy substitutes
- ▶ Nuts and nut butters
- ▶ Beans
- ▶ Soy foods

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TIP

In this section, the food guidelines recommended for the patient also apply to people without a cancer diagnosis. Proper nutrition can provide more energy and reduce the risk for diseases, such as heart disease and cancer. Don't sacrifice your own well-being. Take care of yourself by making good food choices, too!



Add whole grains

Whole grains provide a good source of carbohydrates and fiber which help keep energy levels up. Good sources of whole grains include:

- ▶ Oatmeal
- ▶ Whole wheat breads
- ▶ Brown rice
- ▶ Whole grain pastas

Choose sources of healthy fat

Avoid fried, greasy, and fatty foods. Choose baked, broiled, or grilled foods instead. Healthy fats include:

- ▶ Olive oil/canola oil
- ▶ Avocados
- ▶ Nuts
- ▶ Seeds

Limit sweets and added sugars

Foods high in added sugars, such as desserts and sweets, provide little nutritional benefit and often take the place of other foods that are better for the patient.

Stay hydrated

Drinking enough fluids during cancer treatment is important for preventing

dehydration. A good starting goal is to drink 64 ounces of fluid daily. The patient's fluid goal may be different so ask for guidance from the healthcare team. The patient should avoid drinking large amounts of caffeinated beverages. Too much caffeine can lead to dehydration.

Check with the healthcare team before the patient takes any vitamins or supplements

Some medications and cancer treatments may interact with vitamins and supplements. Choose food as the main source for nutrients. If the patient already takes supplements, provide the healthcare team with a list of them.

Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all

Alcohol may contribute to dehydration. It can lower the abilities of the immune system, and provides no beneficial nutrients.

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is a serious concern for many cancer patients. A person who is not receiving or absorbing proper nutrition needed for healthy bodily function will become malnourished.

Cancer patients diagnosed with malnutrition are at greater risk for health complications, hospitalization, infections, loss of muscle strength and poor quality of life.

To decrease the risk of malnutrition, the patient should try to avoid losing weight during treatment unless advised to do so by the healthcare team. Strict dieting is not recommended during cancer treatment. Losing weight can lower the patient's energy level and decrease the body's ability to fight infection. As much as possible, the patient should aim to maintain a stable weight during treatment.

Even with these serious risks, nutrition problems may be overlooked by the patient and the healthcare team. As a caregiver, you can help watch for the signs of malnutrition. They include:

- ▶ Unintentional weight loss
- ▶ Loss of appetite
- ▶ Changes in food intake
- ▶ Side effects that make eating difficult for the patient

Take this short quiz to see if your loved one may be at risk for malnutrition. Check either Yes or No for each question.

	YES	NO
Has the patient lost 5 to 10 lbs or more without trying in the last 3 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the patient eating less due to decreased appetite?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the patient's food intake changed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do side effects make it difficult for the patient to eat? (eg, nausea, taste changes, sore mouth, trouble swallowing, diarrhea, constipation, dental issues .)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the patient no longer enjoy meal time as much as they did before cancer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you checked 'Yes' to one or more of the questions above, alert the healthcare team. Your loved one may be at risk for malnutrition. If they are unable to eat enough food or drink enough fluids by mouth for proper nutrition, they may need supplemental nutrition therapy.

Food Safety

The immune system is weakened during cancer treatment. It is important to pay special attention to food safety during cancer treatment to reduce your loved one's risk of being exposed to potentially harmful bacteria from spoiled or undercooked foods. The following tips can reduce the risk of foodborne illness:

Keep everything clean

- ▶ Wash hands often and thoroughly, especially before and after handling any food. Be sure to wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Pay special attention to finger nails and the backs of the hands. Encourage the patient to do the same.
- ▶ Keep raw and cooked foods separate. Utensils, cutting boards, plates, and dishes, that have been used for preparing raw meats or eggs should be washed in hot, soapy water. It is best to keep one cutting board for meat and another for fruits/vegetables. Have an extra clean cutting board available for

additional preparation as well.

- ▶ Disinfect all food preparation surfaces, including sinks and countertops both before and after cooking.

Cook food thoroughly

- ▶ Avoid raw meat, such as sushi, undercooked eggs, and other meats that have not been cooked to a proper internal temperature.
- ▶ Cook all eggs until both the white and the yolk are firm. Avoid foods that may contain raw eggs, such as raw cookie dough and homemade mayonnaise.
- ▶ Use a meat thermometer to make sure that all meats are cooked to the proper internal temperature before they are eaten. Use the chart below for reference.

Avoid foods associated with foodborne illness

In addition to undercooked meat, these foods include:

- ▶ Unpasteurized beverages, such as unpasteurized juice or raw milk

- ▶ Soft mold-ripened and blue-veined cheeses, such as Brie, Camembert, Roquefort, Stilton, Gorgonzola and blue or other soft, unpasteurized cheeses
- ▶ Raw sprouts, such as alfalfa sprouts
- ▶ Well water, unless tested, filtered or boiled for 1 minute before drinking or boiled for 3 minutes before drinking in altitudes of about 2,000 meters (about 6,562 feet)
- ▶ Unwashed fruits and vegetables

Store food safely

- ▶ Always store food within 1 hour of purchasing or cooking if the temperature outside is above 90°F.
- ▶ Label food (use a marker or pen) with a “use by” date if you discard the original packaging which includes an expiration date.
- ▶ Put foods with the soonest expiration date at the front of the fridge or shelves so that you are more likely to use them.
- ▶ Discard leftovers or open packages within 1 to 4 days. If you are unsure if something is safe to eat, remember, when in doubt, throw it out.

Be careful when eating at restaurants and shopping for food

- ▶ Buy only from trusted vendors with high grades in health department inspections.
- ▶ Avoid buying food from street vendors.
- ▶ Do not eat free food samples when shopping.
- ▶ Do not choose restaurants with buffets when eating out. If you are at a party, ask if your loved one can go through the buffet line first.
- ▶ At restaurants, ask for meat to be well done.
- ▶ If taking home leftovers, ask to bag the food yourself and make sure to refrigerate the leftovers quickly.

MEAT	INTERNAL MINIMUM TEMPERATURE
Ground beef, pork, veal, or lamb	160°F
Turkey	165°F
Chicken	165°F
Steak or other cuts of beef	145°F*
Pork	145°F
Seafood	145°F
Egg dishes	160°F
Casseroles	165°F
Reheated leftovers	165°F

* Allow to rest 3 minutes before carving or eating

For more on cooking food to a safe internal temperature, visit eatright.org or FoodSafety.gov.

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What should you do if you suspect a foodborne illness?

If you or your loved one gets a foodborne illness, have a plan. Alert the healthcare team as soon as possible. Symptoms of foodborne illness include fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and/or stomach cramps. Mark any recently eaten food or beverage as “do not eat.” Keep the containers in the refrigerator in case the healthcare team wants to test any of the foods.

Neutropenia and Diet

Neutropenia is a condition characterized by lower- than-normal numbers of neutrophils (a type of white blood cell). If the patient has neutropenia, the doctor may recommend special food guidelines for immunosuppressed patients. The guidelines will outline ways to protect the patient from bacteria and other harmful organisms found in some food and drinks.

If the patient had a stem cell transplant, their diet restrictions may be stricter than those of a patient who had chemotherapy or radiation therapy and no transplant.

Food guidelines for immunosuppressed patients vary among cancer centers. Ask your healthcare team for any special instructions.

Side-Effect Management

Cancer patients often experience side effects due to cancer treatments.

Side effects can be either short term or long term. Some side effects happen during treatment. Others can occur after treatment ends. The type and severity of side effects will depend on the specific treatment plan and the patient’s overall health. There are many ways to manage treatment side effects—lifestyle changes, nutrition, exercise, and medication.

As a caregiver, there are many ways in which you can help your loved one manage side effects.

Lifestyle Changes to Manage Side Effects

Making adjustments to your loved one’s daily habits can make the side effects of treatment more manageable and improve quality of life. Use the following suggestions to help manage side effects:

Track side effects and food intake to detect patterns that may be contributing to side effects.

By tracking the patient’s daily food intake, side effects, and well-being, you may be able to determine foods or behaviors that make side effects worse or you may be able to help the patient feel better.

For example,

- ▶ Does a large breakfast keep the patient energized throughout the day?
- ▶ Is a certain food causing the patient to experience gas or diarrhea?
- ▶ Does skipping lunch make the patient feel nauseated later in the day?
- ▶ Once you have figured out what makes the patient’s side effects better or worse, the patient can adjust accordingly.
- ▶ You can also share the log with the healthcare team. This way, the healthcare team can determine if the patient needs medication or a dosage change of a current medication to help manage the side effects.



Use the **Food Intake and Side-Effect Log** to track intake and symptoms

Encourage the patient to remain active.

- ▶ Exercise can help relieve many of the side effects related to cancer treatment. Exercise can help with digestive problems, pain management, maintaining muscle mass and improving sleep patterns. It may sound counterintuitive, but exercise can also increase the patient’s energy levels. Exercise does not need to be strenuous. Even a walk around the block can help.

Questions to Ask the Healthcare Team

Ask the healthcare team the following questions about side effects:

- What side effects are common with this treatment? Can you provide a printed list?
- What can be done to prevent side effects?
- Whom should I call if the patient begins to experience a side effect?
- What side effects or symptoms require a trip to the emergency room?



- ▶ Check with the healthcare team before beginning a new exercise regimen.

Encourage the patient to practice good dental and mouth care.

- ▶ Sore mouth, mouth sores, and dry mouth are all possible side effects of cancer treatment. Proper oral care helps manage these symptoms and prevent secondary issues, such as tooth decay.
- ▶ For a sore mouth, ask the healthcare team about special mouthwashes and sprays that can numb the mouth and throat.
- ▶ For dry mouth, ask the healthcare team about artificial saliva products, such as rinses and mints that can be purchased over the counter.
- ▶ Tell the healthcare team if the patient’s gums are bleeding or if the patient has white patches in the mouth. Both can be signs of infection.

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Suggest that the patient wear loose clothing to lessen pain with digestion or nausea.

- ▶ Clothing that fits tightly around the midsection may aggravate digestive issues and make nausea worse.

Avoid strong smells or odors in the home.

- ▶ Strong odors may trigger nausea in some patients. In the patient's home, avoid using air fresheners, scented candles, perfume, or scented cleaning supplies.

Help the patient maintain a good sleep schedule.

- ▶ Getting a good amount of sleep each night is important to promote healing.
- ▶ Create a relaxing sleeping environment.
 - Provide comfortable bedding.
 - Turn off lights, TV and electronics when it is time for bed.
 - Silence the cell phone.
 - Try a fan or a white noise machine to drown out distracting sounds.
 - Suggest using an eye pillow with lavender in it if your loved one is having trouble sleeping.
 - If sleeping difficulties persist, speak with the healthcare team about possible medications.
 - Try meditation or breathing exercises that help with relaxation.
- ▶ Set the patient up to sleep through the night.
 - Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
 - Limit daytime naps to no more than 30 minutes.
 - Use the restroom right before going to bed.
 - Avoid caffeine before bed.

Food Preparation Tips to Manage Side Effects

Fatigue, sensitivity to odors, and other side effects may make food preparation difficult for your loved one. As a caregiver, assisting with changes to food choices and food preparation can be a good way to help your loved one manage side effects.

Here are some tips to make food preparation easier and help the patient to manage some of the side effects of treatment.

Prepare small, frequent meals throughout the day

- ▶ Your loved one may not have much of an appetite. Eating frequent small meals will help ensure the patient's body is getting enough calories, protein, and nutrients to tolerate treatment.
- ▶ Serving small meals frequently throughout the day allows for better digestion, decreases upset stomach symptoms, and improves energy.
- ▶ Use smaller plates and cups to help control portion size.
- ▶ The patient should aim to eat 5 - 6 small meals a day or about every 3 hours throughout the day.

Ask for requests

- ▶ If you (as a caregiver) are preparing a meal, check with your loved one to see what kinds of food and beverages sound good.
- ▶ Try asking your loved one, "What can you eat for lunch today to build up your strength?" instead of "What do you want to eat?"
- ▶ Try to avoid serving the same thing every day, unless the patient requests it.

Avoid fat

- ▶ Prepare food by baking, slow-cooking, grilling, or broiling to limit fat. Fats can make some digestive issues worse. However, there is an exception! If the patient needs to gain weight or stop losing weight, add in healthy fats and oils to provide extra calories.

TIP

Remember to respect the patient's self esteem. If they are able to prepare food and enjoy cooking, let them do so. Offer to assist by chopping veggies or cleaning up after dinner instead.



Eliminate problem foods

- ▶ Certain foods may make the patient's side effects worse and these foods can differ from patient to patient. If a certain food item isn't well tolerated, remember to eliminate that food from future meals.
- ▶ Foods the patient may have enjoyed before treatment may cause issues now. For example, some cancer patients experience lactose intolerance as a side effect of treatment.
- ▶ You can determine which foods may be "problem foods" for your loved one by tracking food intake and side effects daily.

Check the spices to combat change in taste

- ▶ Changes in taste and smell are common side effects of cancer treatment.
- ▶ Check in with the patient. You may need to adjust or change spices to adapt to changing tastes.
- ▶ If your loved one complains of a metallic taste, try switching to plastic utensils and glass cookware. Sugar-free gum and/or hard candies might help mask a metallic taste.

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Keep aromas to a minimum

- ▶ Sensitivity to smells or odors is another side effect of cancer treatment. If odor is an issue, cook while the patient is out of the house or asleep.
- ▶ Use fans to move food aromas and cooking smells out of the kitchen and house.
- ▶ A small personal fan at the dinner table may help.
- ▶ Prepare cold meals like sandwiches, fruit and cheese plates, crackers with peanut butter, and smoothies.
- ▶ Use cups with lids and straws.

Plan meals in advance

- ▶ Friends and family may want to help prepare meals. Keep a list on the refrigerator of who is bringing what and when.
- ▶ Label prepared foods with an “eat-by” date.
- ▶ You can also use online resources to help with meal planning and coordination.



Use an app or check an online site to coordinate delivery of meals from friends and family.

- [TakeThemAMeal.com](https://www.takethemameal.com)
- [Mealtrain.com](https://www.mealtrain.com)
- [Carecalendar.org](https://www.carecalendar.org)



Use the **Meal Planning** worksheet to plan meals in advance.

Sip liquids between meals.

- ▶ Staying hydrated is important, so encourage your loved one to sip liquids between meals, but to stop drinking 30 minutes before a meal or snack to help build an appetite.
- ▶ Limit drinks with meals so that more solid foods with calories can be consumed. Drinking too much at a meal can replace nutrient-dense foods.

Add iron-rich foods to meals if the patient has anemia.

- ▶ Anemia is caused by a low number of red blood cells. The healthcare team will tell you if the patient is anemic. Often a patient who has anemia has no symptoms, but symptoms can include fatigue, shortness of breath, dizziness, and pale skin.
- ▶ Iron-rich foods include: liver, beef, chicken, pork loin, salmon, clams, and oysters. Non-meat foods that are a good source of iron include fortified cereals, lentils, pumpkin seeds, spinach, kidney beans, tofu, and raisins.
- ▶ Avoid coffee and tea at meal times because they can interfere with iron absorption.
- ▶ Do not provide an iron supplement without checking with the healthcare team.

Serve moist foods if the patient has difficulty swallowing.

- ▶ Moist foods are the easiest to swallow.
- ▶ Foods with moisture, such as tomatoes, applesauce, canned fruits, cooked vegetables, gelatin, soups, puddings, and ice cream all provide water. So, the patient won't need a big glass of water with the meal.
- ▶ Moist foods also require less cutting and chewing, which conserves energy to eat the rest of the prepared food.

Prepare smoothies, shakes, or liquid nutrition supplements to add calories and protein.

- ▶ Liquids can be easier to consume than solid foods. Smoothies or shakes can serve as a small-meal replacement.
- ▶ Pre-made liquid nutrition supplements are available at grocery and drug stores. Ask a registered dietitian or nutritionist which type is best for you.
- ▶ If the patient is not eating well or losing weight, add ingredients, such as whole milk, powdered milk, protein powder, peanut butter, ice cream or

yogurt to smoothies, shakes, or liquid nutrition supplements to add calories.

Choose cold foods to sooth a sore mouth or throat.

- ▶ Popsicles, frozen fruit, or flavored ice can offer relief if the patient is suffering.
- ▶ Popsicles also help with hydration and count toward daily fluid intake.

Include foods that promote healthy bowel function.

- ▶ Add foods with fiber if they are well tolerated. Gradually increase fiber intake to 25 to 35 grams daily. High-fiber foods include whole grains, beans, lentils, and the skins of fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ To relieve constipation, choose high-fiber foods and drink plenty of water.

You can also try giving the patient plum or prune juice.

- ▶ Do not give medication for constipation without checking with the healthcare team.

Choose food and drinks carefully if the patient experiences diarrhea.

- ▶ Avoid high-fiber, spicy, fried, and high-fat foods.
- ▶ Choose white rice, applesauce, cooked vegetables, and low-fat meat and dairy instead.
- ▶ To stay hydrated, the patient should drink lots of clear liquids, such as water, ginger ale, sports drinks, or electrolyte replacement drinks.
- ▶ Call the healthcare team if the patient experiences diarrhea for more than 24 hours.
- ▶ Do not give anti-diarrheal medications without checking with the healthcare team.

Use pictures of food to stimulate appetite if your loved one doesn't want to eat.

- ▶ Seeing food advertisements and magazine pictures can help to stimulate the appetite or trigger memories of good meals.

- ▶ Share your magazines or grocery store ads with your loved one, and use them to brainstorm meal ideas.

Be social during meal times.

- ▶ Meals are only healthy and nutritious if the patient consumes them. Making meals social and fun can help with appetite, and make unpleasant side effects more bearable.
- ▶ Stay sitting up after meals to reduce heartburn and reflux.
- ▶ Enjoy sharing meals and talk about something other than treatments and meal preparation.

Grocery Shopping Tips

A trip to the grocery store may be a tiring event for someone with cancer. Some patients may need a little help, such as a ride to the store or help carrying heavy items. For others with limited stamina and compromised immunity, grocery shopping may not be possible. Here is where a caregiver, friends, relatives, and neighbors can provide tangible help. These following grocery shopping tips will make the trip easier.

Shop with a list

Make copies of a standardized grocery list, which includes perishables like milk and bread. It can be added to each week. Add in-season fruits and veggies. Add any new items for changes in special dietary needs.

Shop early in the day

If you live in warmer climates and shop

early in the day, the food will stay cold while you are driving, and it will be cooler when you are unloading the groceries at home. The grocery store may also be less crowded, as many people tend to shop after work or on weekends.

Bring a cooler

If you plan to buy chilled or frozen foods and aren't bringing them to your loved one's home right after you shop, take a cooler with you to keep the food at a safe temperature until you get home.

Check the dates

Cancer patients often have decreased immunity. This means they are more prone to infection. Be sure to check expiration dates before purchasing food. Also, don't purchase foods with damaged packaging.

Read the label

Some dietary restrictions may limit specific ingredients, such as acid, alcohol, fiber, grapefruit, iodine, lactose, or sodium. The healthcare team, nutritionist or a registered dietitian can provide a written list of suggested and restricted foods.

Learn more about organic foods

"Organic" means that the produce was grown and harvested without the addition of any pesticides or chemicals. For the word "organic" to be on a label, the product must meet certain United States

Department of Agriculture (USDA)-approved guidelines.

Use coupons

Look online and in the newspaper for coupons, especially for protein beverages and supplemental products recommended by the healthcare team. Some specialty products can be pricey. Check out the product web sites for coupons or contact the manufacturer.

Save the receipt

Saving the receipt can help you and/or your loved one to stick to a budget.

Check out food delivery and pick up services

Many grocery stores now offer pick-up services. You send a list to the store ahead of time. A store employee then puts together your grocery order. Once your groceries are ready, you go to the store, and an employee loads them in your car.

Some online retailers offer food delivery services. If a trip to the grocery store isn't feasible, think about having groceries delivered to your door.

Treat your loved one

Your loved one may be on a limited budget for food. If you spot a special food, flower, or magazine that the patient might enjoy, pick it up for them if you can.



Use **Grocery List** to help stock the pantry.

Meal and Snack Ideas

Meals and snacks do not have to be elaborate to be healthy and nutritious. Combine foods from different groups, such as protein, fruits, vegetables, or complex carbohydrates to create a complete meal. Here are a few meal and snack suggestions that are easy to prepare and require minimal cooking.

Keep in mind that these meals and snacks are only suggestions. Make changes, as necessary, to accommodate food allergies or to follow nutrition guidelines provided by the healthcare team. Always practice good food safety when preparing and storing meals and snacks to protect against illness or infection.

Breakfast

- Scramble an egg to eat with whole wheat toast and a glass of low fat milk. Add some grapes on the side.
- Make oatmeal with low fat milk instead of water. Mix in blueberries, cinnamon, and walnuts.
- Top whole grain toaster waffles with strawberries and reduced fat cream cheese.
- Mix a low fat yogurt with peaches and raisins. Top with low-fat granola.
- Try a whole grain muffin paired with low fat milk and pineapple.
- Mix a whole grain cereal with low fat milk and a banana.
- Pair whole grain grits with a fresh orange and a hard boiled egg.
- Make a berry smoothie by blending low fat or nonfat yogurt, a splash of low fat milk, ice, strawberries and blueberries.
- Spread peanut butter on a toasted whole wheat bagel topped with sliced bananas.
- Make a breakfast sandwich with a whole wheat English muffin, egg, and slice of cheese. Pair with an apple.

Lunch

- Pair lean, nitrite-free ham with a slice of Swiss cheese, spinach leaves and tomato slices on whole-wheat bread. Heat in a pan on the stove for a couple of minutes for a hot ham and Swiss sandwich. Pair with a peach.
- Try low-sodium tomato soup from a carton with a grilled cheese sandwich and a pear.
- Top whole-wheat English muffin halves with pizza sauce, tomatoes, and shredded mozzarella to make a mini margarita pizza. Place in the oven or toaster oven to heat. You can add peppers or basil for taste. Add a side salad with dried cranberries and vinaigrette.
- Mix tuna from a foil pouch with low-fat mayonnaise to make tuna salad. Put on toasted whole-wheat bread with lettuce and tomato. Pair with grapes and string cheese.
- Roll nitrate- and nitrite-free turkey meat, a cheddar cheese slice, mustard, and lettuce in a whole-wheat tortilla. Pair with cucumber slices and an apple.
- Mix a low-fat Greek yogurt with raspberries and blackberries and top with almonds. Have a salad on the side with a favorite vegetables, such as peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, or onion. Add a favorite salad dressing.
- Make a sandwich with peanut or almond butter and banana slices on whole-wheat bread. Pair with low-fat cottage cheese and grape tomatoes.
- Try a quesadilla made with a whole-wheat tortilla, shredded cheese, and bell pepper strips. Heat in a pan on the stove or in the microwave. Top with tomato salsa and pair with a plum.
- Microwave or bake a potato, top with low- sodium chili, shredded cheese, and broccoli.
- Try a chicken wrap made with a whole-wheat tortilla, with hummus or tomato and feta cheese. Pair with melon chunks.

Dinner

- **Chicken stir fry:** Stir-fry cubed chicken breast with red peppers, onions, carrots, broccoli in olive or canola oil. Serve with whole-grain brown rice. Finish with a dessert of mandarin oranges and low-fat yogurt.
- **Soup with grilled cheese:** Pair a homemade or store-bought vegetable and bean soup with a grilled cheese and tomato sandwich on whole-grain bread. Add a fruit and low-fat yogurt smoothie for dessert.
- **Hawaiian pizza:** Assemble a homemade Hawaiian pizza using a premade whole-wheat pizza crust, pizza sauce, and low-fat shredded cheese. Top with pineapple, cubed cooked chicken, mushrooms, peppers, and onions and bake. Serve with a side salad.
- **Black bean tacos:** Fill corn tortillas with black beans, lettuce, tomato, diced cucumbers, and shredded cheese for delicious vegetarian tacos. Top with salsa and avocado. Serve with diced cantaloupe for a complete meal.
- **Shrimp and veggies:** Heat precooked shrimp on the stove top. Add a small amount of olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, and pepper. Serve with sides of roasted tomatoes, asparagus, and a whole wheat roll and have a fresh bowl of strawberries for dessert.
- **Loaded baked potatoes:** Top a baked or microwaved potato with shredded cheese and chili. Add additional toppings, if desired. Serve with steamed broccoli.
- **Spaghetti:** Top whole-wheat spaghetti noodles with a sauce made with ground turkey, crushed tomatoes, green peppers and onion. Add low-fat cheese, if desired. Pair with a side salad with a favorite dressing.
- **Roasted chicken and veggies:** Roast sliced zucchini and squash topped with a little olive oil, pepper and parmesan cheese. Serve with baked chicken breasts and a whole-grain roll.
- **Grilled salmon salad:** Prepare a green salad with dark, leafy greens like spinach or romaine and top with grilled salmon, feta cheese, sliced almonds, mandarin oranges, raisins, cucumbers, tomatoes, and a favorite dressing. Serve with a slice of whole-grain toasted bread.
- **Burger:** Top a cooked lean beef, ground turkey or veggie burger with a low-fat cheese slice, lettuce, tomatoes, and onions and serve on a whole-wheat bun. Pair with a corn and tomato salad and a side of strawberries, watermelon, and blueberries.
- **Dinner omelet:** Prepare an omelet that includes sliced mushrooms, tomatoes, and onions. Serve with a fresh green salad and roasted new potatoes.
- **Veggie casserole:** Cook macaroni cheese pasta, stir in steamed veggies like broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots. Toss in cooked tofu, ground beef, turkey, or chopped chicken. Add cooked apples or sliced peaches for dessert.

Snacks

- Trail mix or mixed nuts
- Whole fruits, such as apples,bananas, plums or grapes
- Raw veggies, such as carrots, bell peppers, or cucumbers and hummus
- Low fat yogurt cups
- Low fat string cheese or cheese cubes
- Boiled eggs
- Peanut butter sandwich or crackers
- Tuna or salmon with crackers
- Liquid nutrition-supplement drink
- Fruit smoothie with nonfat yogurt
- Hummus with veggie sticks or whole grain crackers

More places to find recipes and meal suggestions:

American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR): www.aicr.org

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND): www.eatright.org or www.oncologynutrition.org

Cook for Your Life: www.cookforyourlife.org.



TIP

Take snacks for the patient and for yourself with you when you have a long appointment or on treatment days. If you take refrigerated items, make sure to use an insulated lunch bag. Don't forget a bottle of water so that you can stay hydrated.

